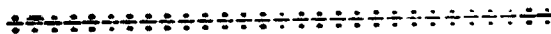
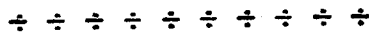


Diss A3.B16 H5

WORDSWORTH AND HIS INFLUENCE
UPON
ENGLISH POETRY.



CHARLES HAMMOND HIPKINS.



Thesis for M.A.

Birmingham. 1916.

Diss.A3.B16/H

BU 2502352 7



3167478

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

PREFATORY NOTE.

In this thesis I have tried to abide by what may be called "the established notions" as to the appropriate length of a thesis for the M.A. degree; such a restraint I regarded as salutary to prevent discursiveness and laxity of construction. Writing within these limits I saw that it would be impossible for me to treat the influence of Wordsworth in all its length and breadth and detail. Being however interested to achieve general conclusions rather than to amass a multitude of cross references and parallelisms between Wordsworth and other poets, I cast about to limit my subject in the way least damaging to any general conclusion I might make. This I have done by interpreting the word "poetry" in an eclectic sense; I have not attempted to trace Wordsworth's influence upon productions that without injustice may be termed "verse." Thus for example I have made no mention of Clares' poems of rural life, or of Campbell's "Gertrude of Wyoming." To have done this would have swollen the bulk of my thesis and would not, as far as I can see, have either diminished or augmented the force of any of the conclusions I have reached.

It might also conceivably be objected that seeing the object of the thesis is to trace the influence of Wordsworth, the space devoted to criticism of Wordsworth and other authors is very considerable; in short that there is "an intolerable deal of sack to one halfpenny worth of bread." I have tried to ensure that my thesis be not lacking in the solid substance intended by the title, at the same time I have been unable to avoid the appearance of this deficiency and the attendant likelihood of criticism as above. I felt towards this question of Wordsworth's influence as one would towards a problem in Statics and Dynamics, that both the influencing and the influenced forces must be estimated else the conclusion achieved is composed of formulae, and affords only a vague and unparticularised meaning. From this I pass naturally to speak of my bibliography. I have nowhere found my subject written up as a whole. My bibliography therefore enumerates the books I have utilised to form my own estimate of Wordsworth and the other authors mentioned. It is not a list of books which make more or less mention of the "Influence of Wordsworth."

C. H. H.

THE INFLUENCE OF WORDSWORTH.

Chapter I.

Introductory: The Augustan Age.

Between the life of the race and the life of the individual there is always a strong parallelism; each reproduces the phenomena of the other upon a larger or a smaller scale, according to the side from which we view it. This is so in the case of the Augustan Age of English Literature; as a mood of the English genius it renders upon a larger scale a state of mind experienced probably by every thinking person that has ever lived. Every such person at some time or other, interested in some aspect of life, is led to give long and laborious thought to it, and then just in the triumph of some grand conclusion falls foul of his endeavour from a strong sense of its utter artificiality and meaninglessness. Step by step he can trace the logical path of his thought's progress, but nevertheless when he gazes from his final conclusion back to actuality and real life, he sees how little they are connected. "What has all this ratiocination to do with life?" is the awkward question that arises. The thinker is fain to confess, "Nothing; I

have turned this matter over in my thoughts till it has become utterly sophisticated and devoid of true meaning. What I now possess is not a living experience but the distorted production that my mind working too exclusively within itself has made of the real experience I originally received." And after this with a sigh of relief and with renewed humility the thinker turns back to the fresh facts of life, and as nearly as a human being may, puts himself in close vital contact with reality. It is human intellect which thus goes astray, for the intuitive, emotional powers of mind have not this proclivity for distortive introspection. They do not however escape, for Intellect chuses to regard their intuitions as belonging to the body of her own concepts and mangles them accordingly in like manner. Human intellect in its cogitations is prone to become divorced from life. It analyses and synthesises, gathers notes, causes and effects, tabulates and assorts, and finally, when it has remoulded the world nearer to its heart's desire the spirit of life has escaped it, and in all that it has conserved there is not one breath of fresh vivid life.

The Augustan Age of English Literature corresponds we said as a mood of the English Genius to this state of mind in the individual. Thinking men as a whole had been seeking to comprehend life too exclusively by

mere intellectual power and had largely failed. They wandered away from life; their mental world was sophisticated, the real breathing spirit of life did not continue with them. Many things and many aspects of things their intellect ignored as of no moment, others it neglected through pure insensibility to them. When we examine the poetry of the time we can appreciate how great a loss this entailed. All those experiences and objects of experience such as emotion, natural beauty, which are not ultimately an affair of the Intellect were largely lost to poetry. They had a certain existence in stock generalities and conventional descriptions, which Intellectualism accepted and allowed, much as it accepted and allowed of logical definitions, but their rich significance and tremulous life were lost. The world of experience to the extent that it was appreciated, was grasped under a set of jejune intellectual formulae and no further. All experiences which did not stand forth clear cut in the "dry light of reason" were questioned and held in doubt. No reliance could be put upon things except to the extent that they did thus stand forth clear cut. The categories of such things were surprisingly few. All the life and soul of civilisation founded upon instincts, moral impulse, love, for the most part escaped this people and were only appreciated in intellectualised form; but all

the machinery of civilisation, custom, etiquette and convention shewed up distinctly. The consideration and criticism of man and society by way of satire became more than the half of poetry. In the remaining portion of their poetry very much was mere ratiocination upon the higher problems of ethics and the questions of finality which inevitably make an appeal to an intellectual age. Science, and particularly mathematics and astronomy, had made no mean progress during this period, the educated classes were thoroughly familiarised with cause and effect as the immutable law of the universe; they conceived of it as permeated through and through with Reasonableness. Accordingly they saw given to them the engrossing task of demonstrating the reasonableness of religion and the established theology. Pope's "Essay on Man" represents the high water mark of this endeavour. But there again the subject they were essaying was too great for the almost exclusively rational powers they deployed for its examination. To examine religion from the intellectual point of view is to examine it from the remotest point whence it is visible. The deep emotion, the crying need, the transcendent yearning behind all religion, the awful depths and terrible outlines of theology all escaped them, just as the real moving spirit of natural beauty and of human emotion had escaped them. Like the Augustan Age

this 20th. century is ~~very~~ engrossed in the examination of religious questions - perhaps it is likewise largely irreligious. It also agrees that the proper study of mankind is man. But present conceptions of both religion and man make it appear that in both these domains of their poetry the Augustans missed the mark. Man is not a mere thinking machine, nor religion only a logical system. The fact was that the Augustan Age saw the climax of long efforts of cogitating upon life which began at the intellectual dawning of the Renaissance, and which had finally led the mind of society away from fresh real and natural life. The Augustans did not know Life truly. For this aberration of Genius there was only one cure, a return as in the case of the individual thinker to the fresh facts of life, and the enlistment of other powers in addition to reason for the appreciation of life. This return and this mustering of powers comprised the Romantic Movement.

Such a change in the general outlook of a whole society could not be effected so swiftly as in the case of an individual, nor could it be so consciously motivated. It had to work more slowly and in semi-conscious fashion. Hardly knowing why, men began to seek "the knowledge of things" rather than the "knowledge about things;" intuitively they became gradually aware that beside that outlook on life which saw all things in the "Siccumlumen"

of Reason, there were others with an equal claim to be utilised and which revealed life in other aspects; they began to use them. As after a winter sleep, the genius of the age gradually cast its slough and awoke with fuller powers to a richer life. The dim ancestral instincts, the old sympathies with nature, which long association with her had evolved in man, began to stir, and natural objects became once more things in which the heart of man deeply and spontaneously rejoiced. Thomson, Goldsmith, Collins, Grey and Cowper, wrote poetry in which nature occupied a greater and yet greater place and lived thus enshrined with an increasingly richer life. The direct central current of this "natural" poetry reached its high water mark in Wordsworth. It must not be forgotten however that the stream of English poetry of Nature was wider than his poetry. It was not merely coincident with it.

Man too, who under the Augustans had been a worthy or an unworthy member of an artificial society, an object of finical laudation or of carping satire, a link in "a chain of being," was seen by the Romantics with different eyes and in different aspects. He had been viewed by cold superficial common sense. Sympathetic insight, emotional imagination now revealed him with his multitudinous passions and emotions as a spectacle never to be exhausted of

interest or significance. He was seen to be the supreme mystery of a universe that was a mystery. In the reflective portions of "The Seasons" Thomson in slightly conventional though feeling vein contemplated the joys and sorrows, loves and fervours of man moving amid the powers and scenes of the Nature he has depicted in her vicissitudes. Goldsmith and Grey too found in humanity the inspiration of much of their poetry. There are also unrealised endeavours in their work which make it greater than its actual achievement. They had a dim sense of the general course of human life and how amid its pulsations there ever sobbed as ground-tone quavering concords of mutability. In "The Deserted village" and in "The Elegy" they seem striving to catch some note of "the still sad music of humanity" and to beat out a measure of it in their verse. In this they attained but a very slight measure of success; the task remained for Wordsworth. Cowper in more personal and lyrical manner gives the record of that share of human sorrow, love and despair which fell to his lot. If we consider Cowper's little poems to Mary side by side with the most feeling of Pope's work "Eloisa and Abelard" we see how great a change was being wrought in English Literature, and to what tremulous palpitating life the spirit of emotion was being awakened. The superficial distinctions of men, which rank them in society, and upon

which the Augustan Age bestowed so much minute attention, were also found to be of very little significance to the new Romantic age which was seeking to know Life in all its truth and depth. Burns and Wordsworth wrote of peasants, revealing the nobility inherent in man apart from his circumstances, and shewing that in such people as these "the great elemental passions" often appear in their purest form. And it was not only those of small possessions, and those insignificant in the eyes of worldly power that found a place in poetry, but also those of tender strength, little children who in the Augustan Age never seemed to play any part at all. Blake was content to write songs too and of children; Wordsworth likewise.

The past, too, which appeared as dead bones in the "dry white light" and seldom served except "to point a moral or adorn a tale", when viewed through the power of emotion and imagination was found to consist of living striving men, a spectacle of infinite interest and value. In Percy's "Reliques" and in Chatterton's Poetry, love of the past was resuscitated; in Scott's work the Past was reanimated. In its desire to penetrate to the life of things the Romantic age was not content merely with the present; it studied and relived the Past.

All the old forest instincts of fear and dread, the forebodings felt amid darkness and scenes of wild ruin

were accepted also as revealing a side of human experience indiscernible when viewed in reason's light alone. In "Ossian," in the Novel of Terror, in "The Reliques," and finally with marvellous perfection of execution in Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" the human sense of the supernatural was elaborated and its vague mysterious influence recorded. Those rarer perceptions also which we call spiritual rather than supernatural, which stir the depths of our being and appear to link it with some greater being in the world outside, and for whose expression we have no ready language prepared, were yet no longer entirely passed over. To a Romantic Age seeking to know life and not merely to know about it, they appeared of the utmost significance. Collins' marvellous "Ode to Evening" anticipates that sense of a spiritual aspect of things, which is now generally considered a discovery peculiar to Wordsworth, and accords it an almost perfect utterance. A spirituality of a more de-materialised kind is to be found in the work of Blake. Finally there is Wordsworth, the greatest of poetic mystics.

This great broadening and vivification of the poetic outlook represents in literature the general aspiration towards freedom which shook the whole of Europe during the epoch of the French Revolution. The

change in literature was not however a suppression of man's intellect but only of its tyrannical domination over the other powers of man's mind. These powers were liberated and aroused from stagnation. And not only was the poetic outlook extended and broadened in scope by the Romantic Movement, but the process of liberation also extended to the garb of poetry. Conventions and traditions of diction and versification were deprived of their authoritative and repressively conservative character, and the way was opened for development along freer and ampler lines. Reason aims at fixity of value in its language; and the Augustans being to so great an extent Intellectualists it was only natural that this fixity should appear as a characteristic of their ~~own~~ language. As we said stock generalities and conventional descriptions were in acceptance as expressions of emotional and spiritual experience very much as logical definitions were in acceptance. The poetic diction and phraseology of the time were thoroughly stereotyped; they did not so much serve to give expression to fresh individual experience as to record conclusions and generalities which had currency as true of the various categories of experience - streams are crystal; rivers murmur in the reeds; zepherus whisper in the woods, willows droop as though in sorrow, etc. Pope

ridiculed this conventionality when he saw it in extreme; he did not recognise that in less virulent form it pervaded the whole of his own writings.

"Where'er you find "the cooling western breeze"

In the next line it "whispers through the trees."

If crystal streams "with pleasing murmurs creep"

The reader's threaten'd (not in vain) with "sleep."

(Essay on Criticism).

It was exactly this that the Romantics had arisen to supersede. This phraseology was merely a collection of generalities which had only a dead logical and not an emotional and living value. Men's minds rested content with these, bandied them about, excoagitated fresh variations, and all the while unknowingly they had lost touch with the reality these terms were supposed to represent - and which they had indeed represented in their first freshness of utterance. More than anything else these terms exemplify the failing of Intellect affecting this Age, its proneness to give a thing a name and be content to forget the thing, to ponder its impressions with too exclusive an absorption and lose touch with Reality. Inevitably the Romantic writers abandoned this diction. They were moving to a vital contact with the fresh facts of Life and they wanted a living language capable of delineating real breathing Life and experience.

The change of course had to come gradually. There was no sudden revolution. In Thomson, Grey, Collins, Cowper, there is a growing life animating their words, and directing their use of them. Burns did all his bad work under the influence of Akenside, Shenstone, and other late Augustans; all his best work is a vindication of the poetical power of dialect and common speech when animated by living experience. Finally there came the work of Wordsworth and his joint preface with Coleridge to the Second Edition of the "Lyrical Ballads," which relegated the old diction to limbo, banning it as "glossy and unfeeling," and propounded the new, based upon naturalness and inspiration.

The artificiality which affected the diction also affected the versification of the Augustans. The heroic couplet and the heroic quatrain had been brought to a high polish; the artistic theory attached to them had been elaborated very fully; examples were to hand of the various effects that could be attained with them, and so, just as the established poetic diction was adequate, these metres were adequate the Augustans considered, and they used them to the almost utter exclusion of every other mode. The Romantic Movement shattered this convention. It veered from the highly polished and artificial forms of the measures, to more natural and simpler forms, finally to

other modes - but it did not abolish the heroic couplet and quatrain from among the other modes any more than it had suppressed reason when it liberated and awakened the other powers of man's mind. Goldsmith exchanges the exquisite point, the intellectual subtlety, the antithetical brilliance of the heroic couplet as Pope used it, for a softer use, yielding a gentle urbanity, and a poetic charm never attained by Pope. Grey uses the heroic quatrain in soft tones of exquisite and gentle sadness far removed from the verve, which for example Prior was able to lend it. Cowper restored to the heroic couplet that freedom of movement it had upon the whole lost since Dryden. He made its music flow in subdued cadences and not as a series of calling echoing answering rhymes, such as it had been in all the Augustan work except in the best of Pope's conversational epistles. In "The Task" he also took up the blank verse already revived to a new freshness and finely handled by Thomson, and moulded it to a style every whit as easy and unaffected as his heroic couplet work. The elaborate structure of the ode always demands great genius to enfuse all its framework with poetic life. Those by Collins and Grey are a great advance upon Augustan efforts in the mode, but even they are affected by the prevalent frigidity and conventionality. Nevertheless

they are fresher in diction and there is keener life stirring within them. Collins' experimental "Ode to Evening" written in unrimed lines is an almost perfect triumph; living nature is enshrined in a living temple of poetry. Percy's "Reliques" and the poems of Chatterton revived the old ballad metres. Burns' songs revived the simple lyric measures. Wordsworth, we shall see later, joined in the movement of reform in diction and metre and set a supreme example of free and natural use of simple measures.

Finally to sum up, the Romantic Movement was a movement for the liberation of all the powers of mind, for the overthrow of tyrannical convention and repressive conservatism in Art, and for a great return to the fresh unsophisticated facts of Life. That old well worn phrase used in criticism of the Romantic Age, "the Return to Nature," will still serve if we take nature in the widest possible sense as meaning Life. Upon the banner of Romantic progress was inscribed that one great word "Life."

CHAPTER II.

Wordsworth.

It has been necessary briefly to examine the passing of the Augustan Age of English Literature and the rise of the Romantic, in order that Wordsworth may be seen in correct perspective. Viewed alone and out of relation to his age he looms large upon us and we may easily after the manner of the unscientific hero-worshipper Carlyle come to regard him as an epoch-making giant. Wordsworth made no epoch, he helped to form one. However individual and peculiar his own achievements may be, it must always be recognised that in their general trend his efforts were part of the main current of Romanticism and only determined it in that they were a part of it. When enumerating the new domains that Romanticism claimed as comprising the true realm of a Poetry that was seeking to know Life, we noted those in whose poetic conquest Wordsworth had a large share, the world of nature, manhood with all its elemental passions and emotions, the spiritual aspect of things. He also assisted in the reform of diction and metre. With two Romantic changes only, the revival of the past and the presentation of the

supernatural, was his name not connected; and not with these because, although he had powers highly capable of this work, as the poems "Laodamia" and "White Doe of Rylstone" for instance prove, he yet chose to do very little work along these lines, and^{so} what work he has left is not characteristic of him. Having thus indicated the position of Wordsworth in the great poetic revival of the early 19th century, we have next to examine what he contributed to it as his own individual production.

None of his contemporaries were so zealously conscious of a mission of Romantic Reform as Wordsworth. He quickly and unequivocally broke away from the past age; which however was not so far removed from him as may be thought. Pope had died only twenty six years before Wordsworth was born; Dr. Johnson did not die till Wordsworth was fourteen. How nearly the Augustan influence weighed upon him may be estimated by the extent to which his early poems between 1786 and 1793 reproduce the Augustan heroic couplet with its contortions, "its glossy unfeeling diction," its absurd personification and moralising. Even in these poems however he broke away from the Augustan Age in his choice of nature as his subject and in the spirit of his treatment of her. None of the Augustans had written so exclusively of her; and in devoting these poems to her delineation Wordsworth was deliberately following Thomson,

Collins, Grey, Cowper, the heralds of the "Return to Nature." As to the spirit of his treatment Wordsworth evinced a sympathetic susceptibility to natural influences which had never before in England found poetic utterance, except perhaps in Collins. Except for the latter's rare work the perception of a spiritual aspect of Nature, of "the half-seen form of Twilight," "of deep that calls to deep across the hills" was something altogether new in English literature.

With the first and second editions of the "Lyrical Ballads" in 1798 and 1801 Wordsworth, accompanied by Coleridge, crossed the poetic Rubicon between the two ages and burnt his boats. The spiritual contemplation of Nature which at this time almost constituted his religion was carried to a high pitch of intensity and consummate utterance in "Tintern Abbey:" Man's place in poetry was also revolutionised: the beaux and wits, the resplendent society dames and simpering beauties who found mention in Augustan poetry, disappeared, to be succeeded by the poor, the lowly and those of tender strength. "Simon Lee," "We are Seven," "Lucy Grey," and "Peter Bell" - the latter written at this time but not published till 1819 - were the initiation of Wordsworth's mission to reveal beauty and elemental human nature in all its essentials within the lowest members of society rather than in the highest.

The theory and practice of poetry also as exemplified in these poems of the "Lyrical Ballads" and as set forth in the Preface to the second edition were both the absolute antithesis of Augustan traditions.

In all these repudiations of the school Wordsworth was following the general trend of Romanticism from stock-knowledge of Life and stereotyped utterance: to fresh living acquaintance with her and to vivid and inspired expression. He was thus a Romantic by three fold claim - by his choice of poetic domain, by his endeavour to see the spiritual aspect of his world, and by the simple language that he adopted to give utterance to his poet's heart. It is under these three heads that we propose to study Wordsworth.

WORDSWORTH'S POETIC DOMAIN.

All revolutions contain within them the seeds of a great danger. They arise to counter or abolish grave limitations, the danger is that in effecting their object they develop within themselves other limitations. Something of this generation of counter limitations occurred unconsciously and probably inevitably in Wordsworth's poetry. He may be considered as the counterpart of Pope. Pope was largely objective, Wordsworth was largely subjective. Pope worked in a

somewhat narrow world and wrote of polite society and its philosophisings, ignoring the world of natural objects and "the deep heart of man". Wordsworth reversed the position, and the world was left still narrow. Poems of nature, poems of man in relation to nature, poems of self introspection, and poems of cross variety between these three comprise practically all that he ever wrote. Man in the throes of civilising himself amid the turmoil of thronging society he utterly ignored. However, no poet can make his poetic domain as large even as that amount of the world known to man. We must recognise the inevitability weighing upon Wordsworth, noting the interesting change from Pope.

Poems of Nature.

A certain amount of Wordsworth's poetry follows the lines of his early poems and is descriptive of natural scenes as for example, "Poems on the Naming of Places," "The Simplen Pass," "The Duddon Sonnets," many passages of "The Prelude" and "The Excursion." Occasionally too in his reflective poems as in "Tintern Abbey" and in reflective passages of the above monumental poems he portrays Nature and her effects in broad sweeps or as a whole. But more often he prefers to take some small object of nature and to write of it rather than of a large aspect. Invariably these objects of his selection are humble and familiar,

many people class them among the petty and the commonplace. It was his peculiar office to open out the soul of little things, to reveal beauty where thousands had passed it by. Consequently the descriptions of The Simplicon Pass and of the sunrise among the hills given respectively in "The Prelude" and "The Excursion" are almost unique instances of his essaying to describe the grandeur and sublimity of Nature. On the other hand he has many beautiful poems on birds, flowers, little children and lowly peasant souls.

Poems of Man.

The poems upon man merge without dividing line into his poems upon natural objects. Man was a natural object to Wordsworth. The poems are truly of man in relation to Nature. He himself gives an explanation of this in Book VIII of "The Prelude." Man was at first to him only one impressive item helping with others to form a natural landscape. But his love of the whole led him to love the parts. His love of nature led him to love man for his own sake. What had formerly been an item in a picture now became a picture in itself, but its background though rendered by true artistry with subdued tone and detail was still a portion of the broad setting of nature in which he first beheld it. He thinks of the lost Lucy in terms of the humble violets and the fair shining

stars and revives his remembrance of her by these association Michael had been alone amid the heart of many a mountain mist, and whether we imagine him at his cottage home or by his unfinished fold, there always creeps into the background of the picture the sad grand hills whose majesty was reflected in his character.

The Romantic Revolt never appears more plainly as a return to the pulsating facts of actual life than in these poems of Wordsworth upon man. The trivialities of human life, the petty social relations governed by a transient fashion or at the best prevalent only in one age, the commonplace routine of life which touches only the surface of a man's being and which varies with the changes of civilisation, all these things were of no moment to Wordsworth. He tried to penetrate into the depths of man's heart; his aim was to study his "great universal passions; "his elemental feelings," and represent these in poetry. In "Michael" he shews us the love of a father and that instinctive clinging to property engraved so deep in the human heart; in "The Affliction of Margaret," "The Idiot Boy" and in many others of the "Poems founded upon the Affections" he delineates with intensity and power the love of the mother for her child; in "Ruth," in "Vaudracour and Julia," in "Laodamia," we are afforded glimpses of those deep yearnings only to be satisfied in woman by natural and happy marriage; in "The Brothers" we have fraternal love.

The sonnets to "Milton" and "Toussaint L'Ouverture" reveal liberty among the principles inherent in the human breast. In the person of the Leech-gatherer is conspicuously revealed that will to live which is the fundamental basis of existence. "Animal Tranquillity and Decay" and "The Old Cumberland Begger" shew us human life reduced to its last constituent. The will to live is now an effort made only instinctive and subconsciously, the upper strata of conscious reason have been almost entirely swept away by the attrition of time and hardship. All these come within the scope of Wordsworth's phrases in the Preface: "the primary laws of our nature," "the great and universal passions of men, They have flowed down from forgotten time in the very mid-stream of life's torrent: they are of great and antique lineage, and so their possession may justly confer upon these characters of Wordsworth's that title first devised by Pater, "the aristocracy of passionate souls."

Poems of Partial Introspection.

Wordsworth was however not always fond of these lowly examples of men and of natural beauty merely for their calm strength or rural charm. In many cases he loved them for spiritual beauties and emotions which they aroused in his own mind and which from thence he was able

to re-read into them. He was half subjective and half objective in his treatment of his subjects. In "The Affliction of Margaret" his sympathetic portrayal of a mother's love is in itself objective, but he passes to be subjective when he makes Margaret say

"My apprehensions come in crowds;
I dread the rustling of the grass;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass."(1)

Such an experience as this does not strike one as characteristic of a mother devoured by apprehension for a lost son; but it is characteristic of Wordsworth. Has he not recorded similar experiences in "The Prelude," how the mountain peak seemed to stalk in pursuit of him in his stolen night expedition; how low breathings and sounds of indistinguishable motion pursued him after he had appropriated the bird from another's springe. In seeking to rise to the height of a mother's distracted grief he merely revived an experience encountered by himself when in a highly wrought state of emotion. He read some of his own personality into the mother as he delineated her apprehensiveness. In the framing of the beautiful though somewhat effeminate poem "The Pet Lamb" Wordsworth knew and admitted that his mind worked thus. A little girl is

(1) 11.64-7. p.117.)

the sincerest of historical ballads, until the climax of the poem is reached in a flash of the purest poetry.

"Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills."⁽¹⁾

At the supreme moment the Shepherd Lord becomes Wordsworth himself. In the case of some poems the element interfused by Wordsworth is so preponderant that the original object cannot claim to give title to the piece. Thus the poem inspired by the infant Hartley Coleridge is inscribed "To H.C." and is a poem of Wordsworth's musings and philosophising and not a simple poem upon a child.

In much the same way Wordsworth recreated all that remained of his own childhood, its memories, and forged the philosophical "Intimations of Immortality." In his treatment of nature too, Wordsworth was half subjective and half objective. In the "Tintern Abbey" he speaks of what the senses "half create and what perceive" and in this poem it is clear that however much he loved the beauty of the Wye Valley, yet still dearer to him was the spiritual glamour his own mind cast upon the scene and which revealed it to him as moisture reveals the rich veins of a pebble. Just as in "The Pet Lamb" he had recognised how he himself

(1) ll. 161-164. p.205.

had played half the child's part, so in a moment even more vivid he realised how great a debt a landscape might owe to his own poet's mind, which was able to enrich things with

"the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poets' dream."⁽¹⁾

Would that all critics were so near the truth as Shelley when he said of Wordsworth,

"he never could
Fancy another situation,
From which to dart his contemplation,
Than that therein he stood.
Yet his was individual mind,
And new created all he saw
In a new manner, and refined
Those new creations, and combined
Them, by a master-spirit's law."⁽²⁾

Poems of Introspection.

Unfortunately, after he had exercised it for comparatively few years, this marvellous poetical power became to Wordsworth of as much interest in itself, as the results it achieved. A mistaken sense of duty led him to endeavour to set upon record the gradual unfolding of his

(1) Elegiac Stanzas. ll, 14-16. p.578.

(2) Peter Bell the third Pt.IV.Stanzas VIIl-lX.

own mind. He may have thought of it as a guide for others.⁽¹⁾
 In 1799 he commenced this work "The Prelude or Growth of a Poet's Mind." Except where his poetical genius compels him in spite of himself to write poetry, the work is prosy and dull. The same may be said of "The Excursion" with equal truth. Although they contain much fine poetry, taken as wholes, that is as poems, these monumental works are huge failures. And, as is often the case, Wordsworth fails through transgressing rules freshly laid down by himself. A poet says Wordsworth is one

"Contented if he might enjoy

The things which others understand."⁽²⁾

When Wordsworth set out to understand even himself he ceased to be a poet. These two poems prove it. The successful passages, the description of the Simplon Pass and of the sunrise among the hills, the stories of the dead Schoolboy of Winander and of the Deaf Dalesman are precisely those pauses in the disquisition, when Wordsworth is content to enjoy without any wearying effort to understand.

(1) Ultimately Wordsworth perceived in some measure the questionable value of his habits of systematised introspection. See "Personal Reminiscences (1836) by the Hon. Mr. Justice Coleridge." "Latterly he thought he had so much acquired the habit of analysing his feelings, and making them matter for a theory or argument, that he had rather dimmed his delight in the beauties of nature, and injured his poetical powers." Wordsworth's Prose Works, Grosart. Vol. III, p. 427.

(2) "A Poet's Epitaph," ll. 55-56. p. 485.

HIS SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK.

The Romantic Revolt was a return to the fresh facts of life. It had several lines of endeavour and we have just seen that Wordsworth followed the two which led him to master the domains of humble natural objects and "the deep heart of man." His poetry also carried Romanticism away from crude supernaturalism to rarer experiences of "the spiritual aspect of things."

"At night he oft would start and wake
Like a lover, and began
In a wild(?) measure songs to make
On moor, and glen, and rocky lake,
And on the heart of man -
And on the universal sky -
And the wide earth's bosom green -
And the sweet strange mystery
Of what beyond these things may lie,
And yet remain unseen."⁽¹⁾

It remains for us to consider this third innovation of Wordsworth's, the ecstatic dreams he had, when in the presence of nature, "of things that he could neither see nor hear." Collins in his "Ode to Evening" as we have seen had slightly anticipated him in evincing a spiritual

(1) Peter Bell the Third. Pt.V. St.VII and VIII.

appreciation of Nature, Wordsworth however took up the task even in his early poems, as we have also mentioned and in the "Tintern Abbey" poem of "The Lyrical Ballads" carried it to an early and splendid consummation. The Preface to the Second Edition gives the theory of his endeavour as "to throw over (incidents and situations from common life) a certain colouring of the imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect."⁽¹⁾ This is not a very inspired statement and came from him in a prosaic moment when writing a thesis. He had a higher conception of his task. Thus in a letter to Professor Rees he speaks of "the spirituality with which I have endeavoured to invest the material universe and the moral relations under which I have wished to exhibit its most ordinary appearances."⁽²⁾ Aubrey de Vere in one of his reminiscences of the poet bears witness to Wordsworth thus conceiving of his powers and endeavours as spiritual: "He proceeded to remark that many who could descant with eloquence on Nature cared little for her, and that many more who truly loved her had yet no eye to discern her - which he regarded as a sort of 'spiritual discernment!'"⁽³⁾

(1) Oxford Wordsworth. p.935.c.1.

(2) p.390. Wordsworth's Prose Works. Vol.111. Moxon & Co.

(3) p.488. ibid.

Such a conception of his task and such an endeavour to accomplish it must appear every whit as astonishing today in this materialistic age as it did in the equally materialistic time of Wordsworth. The understanding of it can only be attained by a consideration of Wordsworth's development from his earliest days. The Poet was born, and passed his whole boyhood in the immediate neighbourhood of some of the most beautiful scenery in all England. His temperament was as remarkable as his environment. In beating upon him the beauty of the English Lake District was stimulating a nature the most extraordinarily sensitive to impressions of natural beauty that English Literature has so far known. He himself describes the remarkable power of natural objects to stir him to the very depths of his being -

"The sounding cataract

Haunted me like a passion."⁽¹⁾

After the experience of his stolen evening row upon the tranquil lake when a huge peak seemed to stride after him, for days he tells us

"My brain

Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being."⁽²⁾

(1) Tintern Abbey. ll. 76-7. p. 206.

(2) Prelude. Bk. I. ll. 392-3. p. 638.

Again he tells us that in his schooldays

" I would walk alone,
Under the quiet stars, and at that time
Have felt what-e'er there is of power in sound
To breathe an elevated mood, by form
Or image unprofaned; and I would stand,
If the night blackened with a coming storm,
Beneath some rock, listening to notes that are
The ghostly language of the ancient earth.
Or make their dim abode in distant winds.

Thence did I drink the visionary power:"(1)

To such a boyhood as this succeeded his life at Cambridge, which in so far as it at all aided his poetic development was a continuation in like kind of the life of his boyhood. Amid the formal scholarship of the place his central emotion was

"a strangeness in the mind
A feeling that I was not for that hour
Nor for that place." (2)

The other large element in undergraduate life, roystering, he looked back upon with regretful contempt.(3) Apart from his reading^{of} such classics as Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, the only valuable use he made of his time was when he wandered into the country alone, and by

(1)Prelude.II. 11.302-311.

(2) " III. 11. 80-82.

(3) " III. 11. 245-255.

the slight stimulus of the lowly scene around him, revived the memories of the hills and lakes and streams where he had spent his early life. To this life at Cambridge and the few uneventful months spent in London immediately after leaving the University, there succeeded the stormiest portion of his life. A visit to France drew him within that torrent of democratic aspiration which had culminated in the Great French Revolution. Only pressure from his friends, who stopped all monetary supplies stayed him from active participation in the struggle for liberty. With all the strength of his being he embraced the ideals and strivings of the time for widespread social reform and increase of individual liberty. The frustration of these hopes was a veritable cataclysm to Wordsworth. When England declared war on France, and when finally the French Revolution itself appeared as a colossal failure and its enthusiasts the assailants of the liberty they had set out to establish, Wordsworth felt the ground crumble beneath his feet. His world for a time lay shivered in pieces. This awful failure of man's practical efforts led him into mazy disquisition as to the why and wherefore, he entangled himself in Godwin's social philosophy with the final despairing result that he "Yielded up ⁽¹⁾ moral questions in despair." Study of the abstract sciences and particularly of mathematics, would not serve to engross

(1) Prelude XI 1305 p.731.

his querulous intellect, and give him release from despairing ruminations. Outward circumstances however at this time exercised a most beneficial effect and probably determined the turning point of his career. Raisley Calvert died in the spring of 1795 and as a testimony of his belief in Wordsworth's poetical powers left him a legacy. This enabled him to make a small home for himself and his sister Dorothy in the country at Racedown, Dorsetshire, and under these circumstances he began unconsciously to recover from his state of spiritual blackness and despair. Once more he was continually in the company of natural objects and had for his constant companion his sister - herself a great lover and observer of nature. They tramped the country-side together. Gradually natural objects and the companionship of his sister recalled the memories of early days, his marvellous boyhood began to live again with all its old ecstasies and visionary happiness. He began to see that the world he had so nearly despaired of was not wholly devoid of a joyous significance for man. His acquaintance with Coleridge which began in 1795, ripened into a warm friendship in 1797, and Wordsworth gained a friend sympathetic to his adoration of natural beauty. Wordsworth became a little child again and soon there opened to him a new heaven and a new earth. In the rejuvenated strength of his childhood's days he wrote "Tintern Abbey" in 1798.

The year 1799 saw him visiting the Lake District on a walking tour with Coleridge and later in the year he settled with Dorothy at Grasmere. How significant are the words he puts into the mouth of Matthew in "The Fountain" written in this same year 1799.

"My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in these days I heard."⁽¹⁾

All the "godlike moments" of his early days revived, his spiritual life opened out like a flower after a storm, he recovered his old visionary power and became once more heedful of the intuitions of his own heart. Wordsworth had safely passed the crucial point of his life when he regained his childlike attitude to life. He clung to it for the rest of his days and thereby - perhaps in a measure unconsciously - made a choice which though some escape yet many people find themselves impelled to make, the choice between two attitudes to life, the choice between two aspects of truth. Should he abide by "truth standing upon external testimony" or "truth carried alive into the heart by passion?" This was the alternative. Wordsworth thought of his visionary mystically-moved childhood; he thought of the dry aridities of truth standing upon external testimony as expounded at Cambridge; he

(1) ll. 29-32.

thought how the intellectual creeds and systems had vanished in the dark time when he yielded up moral questions in despair, and he chose "truth carried alive into the heart by passion." He refused to trust to objective truth which he regarded as the systems and sophistries evolved by "that false secondary power by which we multiply distinctions;" he elected to guide his life by the light given him in "the godlike moments" of his early childhood and of his simple-minded and childlike manhood, he reposed in

" the might of souls,

And what they do within themselves while yet

The yoke of earth is new to them, the world

Nothing but a wild field where they were sown."⁽¹⁾

Henceforth the world no longer appeared to him "in disconnection dead and spiritless;" he accepted the message of

"... that blessed mood

In which the burthen of the mystery

In which the heavy and the weary weight

Of all this unintelligible world

Is lightened."⁽²⁾

Thus led to adopt it, it was from this standpoint that he wrote to Professor Reid and spoke personally to Aubrey de Vere of the spirituality he discerned in nature.

But even in the case of Wordsworth it must not

(1)Prelude III, ll.177-180.

(2)Tintern Abbey, ll.37-41.

be thought that mystical experiences merely of themselves were sufficient to solve the problem of life and make it a joyous and livable thing. Wordsworth himself was not able to live in one continual state of ecstasy. "It is," he said,

"the most difficult of tasks to keep
Heights which the soul is competent to gain."⁽¹⁾

The ecstasy was an intermittent experience; there came times to Wordsworth when the heavens were as brass. It was in one of these periods in 1803 that he composed the first four stanzas of "The Intimations," which express his desolation at having sunk ~~down~~ from the heights which he once possessed.

"There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
The earth and every common sight,

To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore:-

Turn whereso e'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more."⁽²⁾

(1)Excursion. Bk.IV. 11.138-9.

(2)11.1-9.

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

Where is it now the glory and the dream?"(1)

In the last seven stanzas however which he composed some three years later in 1806, Wordsworth rose superior to his depression. "The thought of his past years bred in him perpetual benediction," he remembered

"those first affections,

Those shadowy recollections,

Which, be they what they may,

Are yet the fountain light of all our day,

Are yet the master-light of all our seeing."(2)

and by will power he consolidated them into a faith and held them as a light upon his path through life. In these years the secret of Wordsworth's life lay

"In the faith that looks through death,

In years that bring the philosophic mind."(3)

There was an exceedingly strong volitional element in Wordsworth's natural religion, and we can see now why he spoke to Professor Reed of "the spirituality with which I have endeavoured to invest the material universe."(4)

By imagination and will-power he strove to fill up the lacunae in his spiritual vision of earth; he endeavoured to view the world always, as it shewed under sunshine; he

(1) Ll. 56-7.
 { 2 } Ll. 152-156:
 { 3 } Ll. 189-190:
 { 4 } Quoted antea p. 32.

strove to believe of the world the best that he had ever known; he walked by the light of the godlike moments which visited his soul in its childlike simplicity.

Stated thus plainly Wordsworth's idealising faith bears a somewhat startling appearance. But probably the same holds of every person who possesses any ideal. It is easier to appreciate this if we take an ideal, less rare and mystical, than Wordsworth's belief in the spirituality of Nature. There is the ideal that many men and all poets are said to retain through-out life in regard to woman. They have a dream of woman. It is not that they do not know the world; they are perfectly well aware of all that woman may fail to be, but nevertheless for them the word "woman" never seems to lose its strangely-charged significance. The ideal lives on. Nay, more, so great is its vitality - and this is the value and justification of all ideals - that it conquers the unideal and brings it within its sway. Experience with better emphasis may point out to the idealist that such and such things are true of the feminine half of humanity. "Still they are women" he murmurs and so casts the beauty of his ideal over their deformity. Ideals have a strange power to combat with the unideal things of the world that would destroy them. The true idealist holds only the more firmly to his ideals as the damning facts are brought up.

It was by this strange volitional power and moral strength that Wordsworth held to his belief in the spirituality of nature. He had had experiences which led him to believe it and he continued in the belief. It was not, as Arnold said, that Wordsworth averted his ken from one half of human fate, he knew in sober fact that a vast amount of the world was unideal; but his belief was unshakable that he could discern ideality and spirituality within much of it. His ideal had a conscious volitional strength to assail the unideal and major portion of the world: as we have seen, Wordsworth spoke not of the spirituality with which he had seen the world invested, but of the spirituality with which he had endeavoured to invest it. Moreover, he endowed the character of his Happy Warrior with the same ~~same~~ philosophy of life, clearly and unmistakably shewing it as founded upon unsophisticated intuition, and as volitionally transcending evil by its idealism.

"Who is the happy warrior? Who is he
 That every man in arms should wish to be?
 - It is the generous spirit, who, when brought
 Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
 Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
 Whose high endeavours are an inward light
 That makes the path before him always bright:

Who, doomed to go in company with pain,

And fear, and bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives."⁽¹⁾

(1) L1.1-7 and 12-18.

HIS ART.

To conclude our study of Wordsworth's individual achievements there remains to be examined his method of expression, his Art. His poetic theory is given in the famous preface to the second edition of "The Lyrical Ballads" and covers his poetry in all its aspects. His choice of subject matter and the spirit of his treatment, which we have already examined are here represented in cold prose-theory. Poetry in her romantic return upon the great facts of life is to concern herself

"with the operations of the elements and the appearances of the visible universe; ... the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations and the entire world of nature."(1)

He defined the poet along the lines of his own personality as

"a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is within him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the universe, and habitually compelled to create them where he does not find them."(2)

(1) Oxford Wordsworth, p.939, c.11.
 (2) Ibid. p.937, c.11.

As we have seen Wordsworth was subjective; delighting in his own passions and volitions; he read a dim personality into the spirit of Nature; he was habitually impelled to create passions and volitions similar to his own within the humble personages of his choice, although as a matter of fact they probably did not possess them. That curious working of his mind, half-perceiving, half-creating, which revealed their beauty like moisture a veined pebble, he spoke of in his preface as throwing "upon (incidents and situations from common life) a certain colouring of the imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect."⁽¹⁾ In all this he is a Romantic, aiming to know Life deeply, and unconventionally.

He is likewise a Romantic in the manner in which he deals with the question of ⁱⁿ what language his poetry shall be clothed; for here again, his chief concern is to be in close touch with life. The language of his poetry he states most unequivocally is not to be "the gaudy and inane phraseology of many modern writers" not the "glossy and unfeeling diction" that has passed current so long. He was thoroughly opposed to poetic dictions, which become systematised verbal counters of such long standing that they usurp the reality of the experience they are supposed to represent, and so with their associations eventually come

(1) p. 935. c. i.

to form an artificial world, in which the poet dwells rather than in the world of real objects. The incidents, situations and characters of Wordsworth's poetry were laid amid simple unsophisticated life and could only be described with perfect fitness in the language naturally attached to them, "in a selection of language really used by men." That a selection should be made he considered necessary for two reasons, first, because poetry must give pleasure or cease to be poetry; all words therefore whose associations are not pleasurable must be eliminated: in the second place, many of the situations and incidents are of rare occurrence in simple daily life and so the daily speech must be winnowed in order to rise above the common routine level, and be in keeping; the words used must be those which can be made to carry great intensity of meaning. Wordsworth's aim was to give to the emotion he delineated an effective yet simple utterance and one as realistic as was compatible with refined poetic pleasure. In so doing he rightly considered he was maintaining himself in the closest possible touch with Life.

This same desire to be in the closest touch with Life lies at the root of his theory of style. Poetry is to be "the spontaneous overflow of the powerful feeling" aroused in the poet's mind by the object of his experience. Poetry he did not consider capable of being produced by

mere laborious artistry working to give consummate form "to what oft was thought but never well expressed." Rich vivid living experience alone could inspire the high utterance of true poetry. It was this absolute reliance upon inspiration which gave to his work that "quality of inevitability" which Arnold noted. "Wordsworth's poetry" he said "when he is at his best is inevitable, as inevitable as Nature herself. It might seem that Nature not only gave him the matter for his poem but wrote his poem for him."⁽¹⁾ But the reader of Wordsworth at the very moment when he notes this inevitability cannot fail to be aware that conjointly there is inherent in the work coherence, perfect sequence and every evidence of careful thought, as in these three stanzas from "Resolution and Independence."

IX.

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
 Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
 Wonder to all who do the same espy,
 By what means it could hither come, and whence;
 So that it seemed a thing endued with sense:
 Like a sea beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
 Of rock or sand reposes, there to sun itself;

X.

Such seemed this man, not all alive or dead,

(1) Preface to Poems of Wordsworth. Golden Treasury Series, p.xxii.

Nor all asleep - in his extreme old age:
 His body was bent double, feet and head
 Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
 As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
 Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
 A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

XI.

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,
 Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood;
 And still as I draw near with gentle pace,
 Upon the margin of that moorish flood,
 Motionless as a cloud the old man stood,
 That heareth not the loud winds when they call;
 And moveth altogether, if it move at all."⁽¹⁾

To say that this is perfectly spontaneous and of a grand inevitability will not express the feeling which all lovers of Wordsworth must have for this great poetry; we have to return in full to Arnold and say of it that nature not only gave him the matter for his poem but wrote his poem for him. But how comes it that we have here spontaneousness and inevitability fused with qualities only to be gained by careful and logical thinking, two processes not usually called spontaneous? This is the marvel of genius and is largely inexplicable. In Wordsworth's case we can

(1) Oxford Wordsworth. p.196.

however to some extent trace its working. The poet, says Wordsworth, must have thought long and deeply, otherwise he will never produce any considerable body of great work.⁽¹⁾ Wordsworth's spontaneity is in great part the result of thought and of conscious volitional effort. This seems paradoxical. In poetry however when the will is working in and through and by means of passion and imagination it does not grow sterile and hard but remains healthy and expansive. As it strives towards its goal, as it wills, and continually wills to write poetry it gathers power and volume. Its animation extends around it to allied and sub-conscious powers of mind, which flood with energy and are shaped by the will to an overflow of coherent expression. "The spontaneous overflow" is the sudden unlocking under favourable circumstances of accumulated will energies and of energies aroused and directed by the will. This volitional theory does not attempt to explain the whole miracle of poetic composition by high genius - besides the will there are engaged those "subconscious powers" which are utterly indispensable however much they may be aided and directed by will - but it does throw light upon the method Wordsworth avowedly followed; the long and deep thinking of the poet, the contemplation in tranquility of a past emotion until it was resuscitated; the schooling of the emotion during its gradual resuscitation, to a final spontaneous overflow

(1) Oxford Wordsworth p.935. Column 2.

along the lines of rational, intelligible and pleasurable expression.

To return: Wordsworth relied upon inspiration. His best work is marked by no literary artistry such as we find in the poetry of Pope or Tennyson. The artistic resources which are employed so powerfully by such great literary artists as Spenser, Milton, Tennyson, for example alliteration, onomatopoeia, poetic reminiscence, the introduction of archaisms, Wordsworth ignores. He uses "a style of perfect plainness relying for effect solely on the weight and force of that which with entire fidelity it utters..... it is bald as the mountain tops are bald, with a baldness that is full of grandeur,"⁽¹⁾ Wordsworth, Romanticist though he was, wrought his best and most characteristic work in the classical style, restrained, lucid, calm and concise. Walter Bagehot speaks of it as "pure art," gaining its effects with a minimum of strokes, none of which destroy the total effect by attracting particular attention upon themselves. Its beauty is one and indivisible, we do not single out details as we do when examining ornate art with its complication of charm, and indeed it is to be distinguished from ornate art just as a beautiful face is distinguished from a pretty one. "The pretty face," says the wit, "has more features than

(1) Arnold. Introduction to Poems from Wordsworth.
Golden Treasury Ed. pp.xxiii-iv.

the beautiful one." The beautiful face appeals to us as a whole, all details are subdued and lost in the total effect. This is an admirable comment on Wordsworth's art, for at its best it resigns all aids and adjuncts and appears as a perfection of natural simple expression and yet wholly permeated with that "partie indefinable" which Arnold held was the core and secret of all art. In fact as Bagehot says it is "Pure Art."

After all that has been said of Wordsworth's style and diction there is no need to speak at length upon his metres. In all his truly poetical work he invariably uses them in the manner of Classical Art and in the manner of "Pure Art," to reproduce the same effects of restraint lucidity and simplicity. And the influence that he has exerted - and it is that which interests us here - has been the result of his general manner of writing and not of his invention or use of any particular metre. A few brief notes upon his metre however will be of value since the examples will illustrate the classical qualities and the purity of his Art generally.

The quotation already given from "Resolution and Independence" is a splendid example of his use of the rhymed stanza of six decasyllabic lines. He also used ^{followed by an alexandrine} ~~the~~ the stanza of five lines, consisting of a quatrain of octosyllabic lines followed by one of six syllables, as in "The Blind Highland Boy:"

"Yet had he many a restless dream;
 Both when he heard the eagles scream,
 And when he heard the torrents roar,
 And heard the water beat the shore.

Near which their cottage stood."⁽¹⁾

He had several varieties of simple stanzas of five or six rhymed lines, all of which he used when at his best with the same simple, lucid and restrained effect.

Much of his work he wrote in the simple ballad quatrain, as for example the well known poem to Lucy. His stable metre is however blank verse, and the best portions of his work are unsurpassed, hardly in fact equalled, until we go back to Milton and Shakespeare. The following is the finest passage I am able to select; the opening appears to me of Miltonic grandeur -

"-----The immeasurable height
 Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
 The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
 And in the narrow rent, at every turn,
 Winds thwarting winds bewildered and forlorn,
 The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
 The rocks that mutter close upon our ears,
 Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside
 As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
 And giddy prospect of the roving stream,

(1)L1.46-50.

The unfettered clouds and regions of the heavens,
 Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light -
 Were all like workings of one mind, the features
 Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
 Characters of the great Apocalypse,
 The types and symbols of Eternity,
 Of first and last and midst and without end."⁽¹⁾

Wordsworth was not very successful with the heroic couplet, he scarcely used it except in his immaturity⁺ and when he was worn out. Probably the effort of rhyming was an aid to his muse labouring from a lack of inspiration. He cannot compete with Chaucer, Marlowe, Spenser, Dryden, Pope or Shelly^e in the use of the heroic couplet; he ranks very low.

Of the more intricate and fixed modes of composition he only really accepted one, the sonnet. He wrote odes indeed, but - the Ode to Duty aside in which he follows Gray's "Ode to Adversity" - he did not strictly follow either the classical or any recognised rules of composition. The ode in his conception was what he chose to make it, and for him was simply a poem weighty and dignified and of a length consistent with these qualities. "The Intimations" is the most elaborate that is a great success. The comparatively simple "Ode to Duty" is also magnificent. Oftenest when

(1) The Simplicon Pass. Oxford Wordsworth. Ll.4-20, p.186.

he writes in complicated mode one feels in respect to his work much as one does about his heroic couplet work, that were it not for the incentive of rhyming his lack of inspiration would have doomed him to silence.⁽¹⁾ In these odes he also grossly violates his own precept that the poet should use the natural language of simple men.

To return to the sonnet, by his work in the sonnet-form Wordsworth ranks with Shakespeare, Milton and Keats as one of the greatest of English sonneteers. Some of his sonnets reproduce the Petrarchan form perfectly; the bulk approximate to it, only differing by rhyming the octave upon three rhymes instead of two. Sonnets in the Shakespearean form are rare exceptions, the one "Upon the Sonnet" is the finest. No examples need be quoted at length; the "Sonnet on Westminster Bridge" is perfectly Italian in form; the one beginning "The world is too much with us" only has the Italian perfection technically marred by a slight enjambment of the octave into the sextet. Wordsworth wrote no finer sonnet than this.

But to sum up, after detailing the chief modes and metres used by Wordsworth it can only be said that he utilises each and all with classical restraint, lucidity and simplicity, in the manner of "pure art," which works with minimum strokes of perfect calculation and adjustment, and whose beauty defies analysis.

(1) For example see pp. 226. 232. 311. 323. 327. 329. in Oxford Wordsworth.

CHAPTER III.

Wordsworth's Influence upon S. T. Coleridge.

In the next four chapters it is proposed to trace Wordsworth's influence upon the poetry of his own period. This will not amount to an examination of those poets whose birth placed them within the years of Wordsworth's life. Arnold and Tennyson thus met Wordsworth but they did not belong to his period. Wordsworth outlived his own time, The period to which by all the traits of his nature he belonged is not the Victorian, the period of Arnold and Tennyson, but that of the French Revolution. In this period of Romanticism it seemed throughout Europe as though the humdrum course of life had entered a spring tide, which promised a hope of a richer, fuller, freer life in the oncoming future. The great poets of this period are Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley and Byron. And it is upon these his companions and peers where we may, that in the next four chapters we shall seek to trace the influence of Wordsworth.

The first Romantic poet whose indebtedness to Wordsworth we will seek to estimate is Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Wordsworth influenced many poets, but this poet stands removed from the others in that the influence

exerted was in his case alone the result of close personal friendship. Wordsworth had only one friend a great poet, Coleridge.

Their names are indeed indissolubly joined by "The Lyrical Ballads" in a literary partnership which ranks as perhaps the most important in English Literature. Not that their joint work was a collaboration like that of Beaumont and Fletcher, nor was it voluminous, but such as it was, it marked the decisive beginning of an epoch in English Literature, the Romantic Period. This is its collective significance; it also has a more particular significance, for divided into the two sets of poems of which it is composed, it presents the most distinctive and characteristic work of each author. To think of Wordsworth is to think of "Tintern Abbey;" to think of Coleridge is to think of the "Ancient Mariner." This association of the authors with these typical examples is rendered all the stronger when we remember the lines along which the joint volume was conceived and how the labour was divided. Coleridge opens the fourteenth chapter of his "Biographia Literaria" with his well known account of this:

"... it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and to characters supernatural or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward

nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not and hearts that neither feel nor understand." Wordsworth corroborates⁽¹⁾ this account, telling us further that the attempt first began in an endeavour to write "The Ancient Mariner" jointly. Wordsworth proffered a few hints and some slight practical help but finding the work uncongenial he withdrew from collaboration and wrote poems in his own vein to be included in a joint volume.

The total impression left by these two accounts and by a consideration of the two sets of poems is that Wordsworth and Coleridge divided the poetic world between them, and, following the bents of their respective geniuses, wrote each exclusively in his own particular poetic domain.

(1) Wordsworth's Prose Works by Grosart. Moxon and Co.
Vol. III, pp.16-17.

Judging solely on "The Lyrical Ballads" this is true, but the notion is erroneous with regard to the full body of poetry that each poet left behind him. If it were true, it would be a hopeless task to seek to estimate Wordsworth's influence upon Coleridge or vice versa. Neither Wordsworth nor Coleridge however were so limited in their powers nor are their poetic domains confined the one to the one half, the other to the other half of the world of poetry. Wordsworth had great power to suggest supernatural effect in the Coleridgean manner and to some extent utilised it as in "The White Doe of Rylstone" and some passages of "The Prelude." Coleridge too did not do all his work in the richly artistic and highly supernatural vein of "The Ancient Mariner," some of his poetry in its nature may be described as Wordsworthian. It is in those regions where - on the view of the Lyrical Ballads - each crosses over into the other's kingdom that their mutual influence is most easily traceable; and it is to that body of Coleridge's poetry which is Wordsworthian in tone that for the purpose of this thesis we must first turn.

In examining this element of Wordsworthianism in Coleridge's poetry one must keep in mind the date when the friendship between the two poets began. Unfortunately there is no indubitable certainty upon this. E.H. Coleridge discusses the point at length in "The Letters of Coleridge"

and the generally accepted conclusion which he reaches is that they probably met first in 1795; throughout 1796 there was some occasional intercourse; their real intimacy and friendship however dated from the meeting at Racedown in June 1797. This last seems to be the all important date.

Turning now to the Wordsworthian portion of Coleridge's poetry, two years before 1797, when at the best Wordsworth was a mere acquaintance, Coleridge had written his "Aeolian Harp" which contains rudimentary suggestions of the pantheistic philosophy inherent in the Wordsworthian religion of nature. The poet after rejoicing easily and with no especially felicitous ardour in the pleasures of nature is visited by a more serious and lofty mood; the question arises within his mind -

"And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each and God of all?"⁽¹⁾

In Wordsworth's work already written at this time there is no such clear intellectual conception of higher powers within nature as this of Coleridge's. Their great intimacy is dated from June 1797. In this same month upon the occasion of a visit from Wordsworth, his sister, and

(1) L1.44-45.

Charles Lamb, Coleridge wrote his poem "The Lime tree Bower my prison." So much he tells us in his letters,⁽¹⁾ and explains how a skillet of boiling milk, inadvertently spilled upon his foot by his wife, was the somewhat ludicrous cause which incapacitated the future author of the Ancient Mariner from joining his friends in an evening walk. Towards the close of the poem this passage occurs -

"... though now the bat
Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,
Yet still the solitary humble-bee
Sings in the bean-flower! Henceforth I shall know
That nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure,
No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
No waste so vacant, but may well employ
Each faculty of sense and keep the heart
Awake to love and beauty!"⁽²⁾

The simple effectiveness of the lines -

"Yet still the solitary humble-bee
Sings in the bean-flower"

and the minute observation of nature they evince, remind one of the later work of Wordsworth's best vein. The concluding sentence of the quotation is an obvious anticipation of some of the ideas of "Lines written above

(1) Letters of Coleridge. p.224.

(2) Ll.56-64.

Tintern Abbey," which was not composed by Wordsworth till over a year later on July 13th, 1798. The line "Nature never did betray The heart that loved her" seems unquestionably to be based upon line 60 in the quotation from Coleridge; and Wordsworth's thought that by the power of nature his sister's mind

"Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms

Thy memory be as a dwelling place

For all sweet sounds and harmonies,"⁽¹⁾

is an amplification of the thought which closes this quotation from Coleridge. In February 1798 Coleridge composed one of the most beautiful of his minor poems "Frost at Midnight." The poem is autobiographical, the poet has been pondering his own unhappy boyhood and at the close promises his infant boy a happier lot than fell to his father -

"For I was reared

In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,

And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.

But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze

By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags

Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,

Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores

And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear

(1)Tintern Abbey. Ll. 140-2.

The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
 Of that eternal language, which thy God
 Utters, who from eternity doth teach
 Himself in all, and all things in himself.
 Great universal Teacher! He shall mould
Thy spirit and by giving make it ask.
 Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
 Whether the summer clothe the general earth
 With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
 Betwixt the turfts of snow on the bare branch
 Of mossy apple tree, while the nigh thatch
 Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eve-drops fall
 Heard only in the trances of the blast,
 Or if the secret ministry of frost
 Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
 Quietly shining to the quiet moon."

This passage anticipates by a year much of the spirit of
 that poem of Wordsworth's sometimes entitled "The Education
 of Nature" or "Nature's Lady" and which begins "Three years
 she grew in sun and shower." In Wordsworth's poem too
 there seems some reminiscence of the first two passages
 italicised in the quotation. He borrows the word
 "mould" in the fourth stanza to express much the same
 thought, saying that the beauteous objects of nature have
 within themselves -

"Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy."

As to the second passage immediately following some echo of its music as well as a reiteration of its ultimate meaning seems to be contained in the line

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her."

The last two passages italicised evince a most subtle and imaginative grasp upon Nature. They have no counterpart in Wordsworth's work, but had he utilised them, their beauty would not have been alien to the beauty of his own work or have done aught but enhance it.

The year 1798 also saw the composition of "The Nightingale" of which lines 30-34 expound a teaching almost identical with that of "Expostulation and Reply," "The Tables Turned," and "The Poet's Epitaph," all of which it thus anticipates.

From these facts certain conclusions inevitably follow. In the first place Coleridge before he was at all intimate with Wordsworth, possibly before he knew him, enjoyed Nature to the extent of expressing appreciation of her in his poetry and of entertaining the nucleus of an intellectual pantheism. So much is clear from "The Aeolian Harp." It is also certain that in poems written after he knew Wordsworth, viz. "The Lime tree bower my

prison," "Frost at Midnight," and "The Nightingale," he anticipated many of the ideas elaborated later by Wordsworth in his most characteristic fashion. But this did not occur until after he had entered upon the period of his great intimacy with Wordsworth - a point to be borne in mind. In the poem "Fears in Solitude" written April 28th, 1798, there is also descriptive poetry far finer than he had written before he knew Wordsworth.

The great question is did Wordsworth assist to bring about this development in his friend's poetry? Devotees of Coleridge say no; and seizing upon his very patent anticipations of Wordsworth make him the latter's teacher; Wordsworth they allow surpasses his master, they see him as a Plato improving upon a Socrates, but Coleridge say they, was the initiator of the so-called Wordsworthian sentiment of nature. This I think is hardly sound. There can be no question of denying that Coleridge had a very great appreciation of Nature before ever he met Wordsworth. Had this not been so he would not have found place in his poetry, nor would he have revolved in his mind the pantheistic conception expressed in "The Aeolian Harp." But it should be noted that this conception itself is predominantly intellectual and philosophical though also emotional and poetic. A mind philosophical and at the same time poetical and susceptible to the influence of

nature would tend, after the manner of all intellect, to generalise upon its experience. To become more general the experience would be detached from close association with any particular object of nature, would be somewhat dematerialised and so become more ethereal in its nature. The supreme example of such a mind working thus is Shelley. His pantheism of Nature does not appear to be attached to any particulars in Nature; it is framed in general conceptions; it is dematerialised and ethereal, the joint product of his philosophical powers and his poetical susceptibility to nature. Now it seems to me that Coleridge had much such a mind as Shelley - this perhaps explains why Shelley understood him so perfectly and had so great a sympathy ~~for~~ him. Coleridge's mind being then both endowed with philosophical power and poetical susceptibility to Nature, it would appear that his poetry should develop along much the same lines of etherealness and generality as Shelley's in its pantheistic conceptions. From this it was stayed I think by the influence of Wordsworth; but in one poem where Coleridge most certainly writes in the full freedom of his own spirit we do get a hint of this etherealness and generality that we have suggested as the natural development of his poetry. The poem is the "Ode to France" written in February 1798, and the portion which is of interest is the last nine lines, the poet's

parting homage to the spirit of Liberty, which he found
as the spirit of Nature -

"Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,
The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the waves!
And there I felt thee! - on that sea-cliff's verge,
Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above,
Had made one murmur with the distant surge!
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea and air,
Possessing all things with intensest love,
O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there."

This I claim might easily be mistaken for Shelley.

Thinking then that Coleridge's poems of nature after "The
Aeolian Harp" would have developed along such lines as the
above, and seeing how closely the poems he actually did
write keep to homely and particular experience and have a
homely intimacy and a material rural flavour about them, I
consider that he was probably influenced in them by
Wordsworth. This is admittedly speculative. But
Coleridge had a craze for what he called philosophical
poetry; the "Aeolian Harp" is the initiation of it in his
own practise; he cast a philosophical leven into
Wordsworth's mysticism and thus enabled Wordsworth to
achieve such a semi-philosophical and semi-pantheistic
utterance as "Tintern Abbey," and finally he set Wordsworth

upon the project of writing "The Prelude or Growth of a Poet's Mind." When therefore Coleridge in poems of nature, where one would expect him to be philosophical, writes with engrossment in particular experience and is more concerned to preserve its flavour than deduce its meaning, one naturally seeks an explanation. And when the poetry thus produced belongs to the domain that his friend afterwards made peculiarly his own, it appears not wholly unreasonable to surmise that this friend had influenced him. If this probability be true we must confess that Coleridge was very apt at giving fine metrical expression to his ideas in the fresh form they took under the influence of Wordsworth, for very little time elapsed between the initiation of the close friendship of the two poets and the composition of these poems we are examining. But this collary is no stumbling block. Coleridge's intellect was of that philosophical stamp preeminently swift in grasping and formulating ideas. In this he excelled Wordsworth; and at the least he had as ready a command of expression.

It cannot then be claimed as a scientific certainty but there is a strong probability that Wordsworth influenced Coleridge in the latter's Wordsworthian poems. Moreover if this is not the case, certain questions that may be asked become not only awkward but virtually

unanswerable. If Wordsworth did not influence him, why in that portion of "Frost at Midnight" already quoted, when anticipating with fatherly care the ideal childhood that shall be his son's, does he describe the very childhood of Wordsworth? This childhood had not been Coleridge's; if he had not seen the inestimable wealth of Wordsworth's mind and envied it, why should he consider the childhood that produced it as the one most highly desirable for his own child? Again during the period of their great companionship he seemed under a veritable spell for he wrote of Wordsworth in terms of what seems almost extravagant praise, as in his letters to Cottle -

"I feel myself a little man by his side and yet do not think myself the less man than I formerly thought myself... T.Poole's opinion of Wordsworth is that he is the greatest man he ever knew. I coincide."(1)

Finally if Coleridge was not thus reaping ideas from Wordsworth, why after hearing him recite from "The Prelude" should he write and address to Wordsworth a poem commemorative of the past, speaking of

"all

"Commune with thee had opened out."(2)

(1) Letters of Coleridge, by E.H.Coleridge. p.221.

(2) "To a Gentleman," Ll.227-328.

To assert that Wordsworth influenced Coleridge in these poems of Wordswerthian tone is one thing, exactly to estimate that influence is quite another and one fairly impossible of achievement. What happened I imagine in the early days of their acquaintance is that like all people mutually attracted to one another they cast around for a common interest, and being poets lighted upon poetry, to find one another congenial spirits. To speak of poetry, for Wordsworth at any rate would be to speak of nature. Coleridge the brilliant conversationalist expounded his pantheistic ideas concerning her basing them upon his own experience. We picture the response Wordsworth would make, his plain countenance afire with a divine enthusiasm as he spoke of his own visionary hours in her presence, of which these ideas of his companion seemed the very explanation. Each poet helped the other. The theologic-philosophical element supplied by Coleridge helped Wordsworth to sort his mystical experience according to principles and gave him trains of thought and modes of speech which yielded him means of expression. This explains the extent to which Wordsworth assimilated and reproduced phrases and ideas of Coleridge's. As already stated this influence bore fruit in "Lines written above Tintern Abbey," which is the clearest exposition Wordsworth ever gave of his natural religion. The effect upon Coleridge was more immediate. He had the ideas formulated,

though presumably in the rather dry philosophical manner of "The Aeolian Harp;" Wordsworth revealed to him a wealth of emotional experience, which confirmed him in his own thoughts and swelled them with the enthusiasm enabling him to voice them in poetry. He wrote straight away. At the same time his experiences being thus animated to a rich emotional life, they were not so easily to be swayed by the philosophical powers of his mind, which would have dematerialised them and made them somewhat ethereal in the process of giving them the generality of a philosophical conception. Wordsworth's emotions and experiences except where he yields to Coleridge's influence are attached to particular items of nature, have a homely intimacy, the immediate experience which gave them birth seems close behind them. In these "Wordsworthian" poems of Coleridge's, his sentiment of nature is swayed to a close similarity to that of Wordsworth himself. It is not sophisticated, the actual experience lies very close behind it, it has a homely intimacy; the realism is greater, we do not have the spirit of Nature seen in her aspect of Liberty as

"The guide of homeless winds and playmate of the waves" but "the solitary humble bee sings in the bean flower," silence fills up the "trances of the blast," icy coldness becomes almost a real presence stealing upon its "secret ministry" to congeal the earth's waters. The emotional

experience refuses all philosophical remoulding which would make it more dematerialised in making it more general.

This explanation I think does justice to Wordsworth and yet does not ignore the great power and originality of Coleridge, allowing to him his own great sensibility to nature, his keen philosophical mind and his ready literary art which enabled him to anticipate the yet unwritten but greater work of Wordsworth.

This element of Wordsworthianism which we have been examining in the poetry of Coleridge does not extend beyond his minor poems; his great productions "The Ancient Mariner," "Christabel," "Kubla Khan," have no trace of it and in their own qualities are antithetical to it. We may then justly consider it as having been largely abortive in Coleridge's poetry. The same may be said of the effect it wrought in his life. Coleridge was never able to derive from his communion with nature a lasting stay for life and a panacea for its evils. He himself recognised this with most poignant regret in the "Ode to Dejection" addressed in disguise to Wordsworth in 1802 -

St. III.

My genial spirits fail,
 And what can these avail
 To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
 It were a vain endeavour
 Though I should gaze for ever

On that green light that lingers in the west:
 I may not hope from outward forms to win
 The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

IV.

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
 And in our life alone does nature live:
 Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!

And would we ought behold, of higher worth,
 Than that inanimate cold world allowed
 To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,

Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
 A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud

Enveloping the earth -

Ah! from the soul itself must there be sent
 A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
 Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

No real man has ever yet found this world an ideal place.
 It is only the idiot rubbing his hands in the sun and
 smiling he knows not why, that looks upon it with all
 inclusive joy. To us human beings Evil is a fact. But
 to every man there comes, time and anon, amid the petty
 sollicitudes and small joys of existence certain experiences
 which enable him to form his ideals within himself -
 perhaps it is the passing sight of a beautiful face, some
 deed, a rare transcendental moment when the heavens seem

to open. The optimist and the happy man hold fast by these moments and the ideals based upon them. By the power of his mind and in far greater volitional fashion than is generally supposed, he extends their light and significance as far as possible over the tracts of life otherwise gloomy. This we saw Wordsworth did with his ideal of a spirituality within Nature, and this Coleridge laments to Wordsworth his failure to do. Wordsworth had felt in his youth that he should be

"else sinning greatly

A dedicated spirit."⁽¹⁾

His whole life as Coleridge recognised had been one long effort of will and moral power to achieve this destiny; says Coleridge

Jan. 1804. To Ric. Sharpe. On Wordsworth.

".....he both deserves to be, and is, a happy man; and a happy man, not from natural temperament, for therein lies his main obstacle, not by enjoying of the good things of the world - for even to this day, from the first dawn of his manhood, he has purchased independence of leisure by austere frugality and daily self-denials; nor yet by an accidental confluence of amiable and happy-making friends and relatives, for every one near to his heart has been placed there by choice and after knowledge and deliberation;

(1)Prelude IV. Ll.336-7.

but he is a happy man, because he is a Philosopher, because he knows the intrinsic value of the different objects of human pursuit and regulates his wishes in strict subordination to that knowledge; because he feels, and with a practical faith, that^e truth of that which you, more than once, my dear sir, have with equal good sense and kindness pressed upon me, that we can do but one thing well, and that therefore we must make a choice. He has made that choice from his early youth, has pursued and is pursuing it; and certainly no small part of his happiness is owing to this unity of interest and that homogeneity of character which is the natural consequence of it...."(1)

Coleridge never had the moral or volitional power to do as Wordsworth did; his spirit with all its marvellous powers lacked a citadel. This central deficiency explains all Coleridge's failures. It explains why he never established himself in any profession as Hazlitt did in journalism or Wordsworth in poetry; why he became a slave to opium; why in the philosophical world he dabbled with Hartleyan philosophy, theology, German metaphysics, initiating no progress and earning for his marvellous intellect very little more than the credit for introducing the latter into English thought; why he could never elevate his mystical beliefs into a sturdy faith and

(1) Letters of Coleridge. pp.449-50.

so in comparison with Wordsworth appeared as "a little child upon a lonesome moor, not far from home but every whit lost;" and finally it explains why with poetical powers of the very highest order he has left only a mere handful of great poems. "I compose very little," he said, "and I absolutely hate composition. Such is my dislike that even a sense of duty is sometimes too weak to overpower it."⁽¹⁾ Coleridge lacked the will to write poetry, and as we shewed in the case of Wordsworth, the will to write is almost the root of the whole matter in poetic composition.

But if Coleridge's will thus failed him in poetic endeavour, how it may be asked, did he come to write "The Ancient Mariner" and the two parts of "Christabel" and if it failed to establish him in a joyous attitude to life why did he write -

"There was a time when though my path was rough

This joy within me dallied with distress."⁽²⁾ ?

Both halves of the question carry us back to this same period of his life, the golden days of his poetic youth when he and Wordsworth spoke of high things and wrote poetry together. It was during this period spent amid the country of Nether Stowey and Alfoxden that he wrote "The Ancient Mariner" and the first part of "Christabel." When

(1) Letter to John Thirwall Nov. 19, 1796. p.181.
Letters of Coleridge.

(2) Dejection. St.VI. See note in Appendix.

Wordsworth removed to the Lake District, Coleridge followed him and there in 1800 wrote the second part of "Christabel." Apart from "Kubla Khan" the fruits of an opium dream he did all his best work when in close association with Wordsworth. His poem "To a gentleman" written in January 1807 and addressed to Wordsworth upon the occasion of his reciting to Coleridge from "The Prelude" teaches us to see more than a coincidence in this.

"Ah! as I listen'd with a heart forlorn,
The pulses of my being beat anew:
 And even as life returns upon the drowned,
 Life's joy rekindling roused a throng of pains -

Sense of past youth and Manhood come in vain;
 And Genius' giver, and Providence nor in vain;
 And all that I had culled in wood walks wild,
 And all which patient toil had reared, and all
Commune with thee had opened out - but flowers
 Strewed on my corse, and borne upon my bier,
 In the same coffin, for the self-same grave!

And when - O friend! my comforter and guide!
Strong in thyself, and powerful to give strength!-
 Thy long sustained song finally closed,
 And thy deep voice had ceased -

I sate, my being blended in one thought

(Thought was it? or aspiration? or resolve?)

Absorbed, yet hanging still upon the sound -

And when I rose, I found myself in prayer."

This influence Wordsworth had upon Coleridge was not a new effect but rather the last dying flicker of an old one.

This was not the first time that Wordsworth had stirred the pulses of Coleridge's life, nor the first he had been to him "a Comforter and guide, strong in himself and powerful to give strength." Something of the sort had, I imagine, taken place before in the old days at Nether Stowey and Alfoxden. If not why, as we asked before, did Coleridge speak of Wordsworth in terms of such extravagant praise? "The giant Wordsworth, God love him!" such things as these he not merely said but wrote to Cottle.

There can be no doubt that at this time Wordsworth was a tremendous power for good in the life of Coleridge. As we have already suggested he laid open to him all his wealth of mysticism; and fortified him in his own experiences and thoughts. He did more, he infused into the somewhat invertebrate Coleridge some of that moral strength and stamina of will which equally with his mysticism was the secret of his happy life. Coleridge for a time had glorious spiritual ideals held firmly before him; he lived with a zest; he was fired with divine energy which following the bent of his poetical powers flooded

over into the marvellous poetry that he wrote during this time. He had the will to write and he wrote. It is no exaggeration to suggest that but for Wordsworth's influence "The Ancient Mariner" would never have been so diligently finished and that "Christabel" would probably have been more of a fragment than it actually is.

Some critics seek to trace a literary influence from Wordsworth upon Coleridge's technique, and maintain that Wordsworth's simplicity and severity cured his faults of bombast and tumidity. We certainly do not get such horrors as "moon-blasted madness when he yells at midnight" and "eye starting wretches and rapture-trembling seraphim" after 1797. His exuberance, artistic improprieties, diffusiveness, are also chastened and disappear altogether in his masterpiece "The Ancient Mariner." It is however very easy to be unjust in attributing the improvement to Wordsworth's influence. He would be a rash critic who would belittle the original powers of Coleridge as a literary artist. He himself claims at least half the credit for the evolution of the famous Preface to the Lyrical Ballads. And just as he was first with the poetic expression of the ideas he and Wordsworth brought together, so he was very early in the field with poems executed in the style expounded in the Preface. The "Wordsworthian" poems of his that we have been examining are

simple, clear, restrained, effective. It was the thinking and theorising that produced the "Lyrical Ballads," that likewise produced this improvement in Coleridge's poems. To be first however in putting into practice theories of style seems to me to be virtually an original achievement - even allowing that the theories were a joint production - certainly original compared with the formulation of jointly evolved ideas. Expression is not communicable, ideas are.

Coleridge I think may claim to originality both in his style and in the improvements of simplicity and concision he effected. Coleridge however was not satisfied with this subdued mode of poetry and abandoned it. Moreover he had his doubts about much that was executed by Wordsworth in his plain mode, as he wrote in one of his letters -

"although Wordsworth's preface is half a child of my own brain, and arose out of conversations so frequent, that, with few exceptions, we could scarcely either of us, perhaps, positively say which first started any particular thought (I am speaking of the Preface as it stood in the second volume), yet I am far from going all lengths with Wordsworth.... a daring humbleness of language and versification, and a strict adherence to matter of fact even to prolixity" have startled me.... I rather suspect that somewhere or other there is a radical difference in our

opinions respecting poetry."⁽¹⁾

Coleridge in fact was not so narrow-minded as Wordsworth, who very largely thought that his own unadorned intensive style of writing was the whole of Poetry. Coleridge saw it was but a "school" or "style" among the many that comprise Literary Art. For his own great masterpieces he chose a method of working which permitted the extensive use of melody and colour as in "The Ancient Mariner." Coleridge can not be claimed as a literary disciple of Wordsworth's technique. At the most we may say that Wordsworth awoke Coleridge and braced him to put forth the best powers within himself and when Coleridge was at his best he could not write amiss.

Wordsworth opened to Coleridge a world of mystical thought and experience, thus strengthening him in thoughts and beliefs he already possessed, and for a time taught him the great lesson "To thine own self be true." It is with these two things that we must credit him as the extent of his influence upon Coleridge.

(1) Letters of Coleridge p.386:7.

CHAPTER IV.

Wordsworth's Influence upon John Keats.

The general movement of Romanticism we described as the revulsion from a sophisticated atmosphere of thought and feeling to one in more intimate touch with the great facts of life. It was a widening and freshening of Life, and as we saw had several separate lines of endeavour leading to the several domains which constituted the Romantic world of poetry. Among the poets who strove in this general return to fresh communion with Life, none is more unmistakably a romantic than John Keats. His work throws a vivifying glory of beauty upon the past as found in old story, upon nature, upon the heart of man, and upon the heart of man not merely as it was represented in his own palpitating poet's breast, for the poet was not wholly subjective, his highest ideal was objective to attain to

"a nobler life

"Where I may find the agonies, the strife
of human hearts."⁽¹⁾

Unlike Coleridge Keats was only an acquaintance of Wordsworth's; he was also a younger man by twenty four years. The short period of Keats' life, however, wherein

(1) Sleep and Poetry. Ll.123-4.

he devoted himself to poetry, from 1817-1820, comes quite close in date to Wordsworth's poetical prime. It is a criticism very common and largely correct that Wordsworth wrote all his best work between the years 1798-1808, and so roughly only one decade separates the two poets. Wordsworth of course as a man was to live robustly and as a poet was to linger for many more years even after 1817, the year in which Keats' first volume appeared. The contents of this 1817 volume offer decided evidence that it was produced in a period when a strong current of nature poetry was moving in literature. Two of the longest poems, the first and the last in the volume, have considerable claim to be described as poems of nature and in several of the others the poet's regard for nature appears incidentally. In their general spirit however they are so many removes from the main current of nature poetry as it flowed in the work of Wordsworth, that one naturally casts round to see by what side channel or back-water of romanticism Keats was influenced in this poetry. The search need go no further than the dedication of the volume to Leigh Hunt. The influence of this man predominates throughout Keats' volume, and he it was who influenced him in his poetry of nature. Despite the value of the encouragement the clever journalist gave to the young poet, this influence of Hunt's upon Keats cannot

be described as other than bad. Hunt's own works do not testify to his possessing poetical powers of any real greatness, and his critical appreciation, though often very sound upon points of technique, as for example his eulogy in the introduction to the "Story of Rimini," of Dryden's free use of the heroic couplet, yet tended to superficiality. He recognised the value of the work done by the Lake poets "It was the Lake poets in our opinion... that were the first to revive a true taste for nature;"⁽¹⁾ but his own appreciation of her by no means followed the same lines as theirs, though he may have thought it did. Hunt was also a quasi-disciple of Wordsworth upon the question of poetic diction; the most valuable portion of his Preface is unquestionably inspired by the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads.

"... the proper language of poetry is in fact nothing different from that of real life and depends for dignity upon the strength and sentiment of that it speaks." The⁽²⁾ acceptance of such a literary principle as this throws the heaviest responsibility upon the author's good taste; Wordsworth himself, as we saw, was sensible of the need of preserving the artist within the poet as a conscious agent of negative authority, invested with the inhibitory powers of good taste, that all unpoetical associations and elements

(1) In his review of Keats' 1817 volume. Reprinted by Buxton Forman in his edition of Keats. Vol. I, p. 333.

(2) Compare Arnold's famous criticism of Wordsworth's diction. Antea p. 50

of disgust might be removed. Hunt in his own compositions relied upon his own good taste and to modern readers it appears wholly to have failed him. In his practice the propriety of using the language of real life is construed into the right to be slangy, trivial and sentimental in his diction. Thus though the Romantics helped both to stimulate his love of nature and also to mould his opinions of poetic theory, his resultant poetry of nature was a very different from theirs; it was merely a superficial luxuriation in natural delights which he catalogued in his very inadequate and questionable diction. To return to Keats; Hunt's influence upon him, immature as he yet was in taste, and constitutionally prone to take delight in sensuous effects, led him to reproduce these general Huntian characteristics in his own volume of 1817, and particularly in the two poems upon nature, "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," and "Sleep and Poetry." Keats' practice is in fact diametrically opposed to Wordsworthian principles. Wordsworth had regarded the beauty of nature as "a living presence of the earth" which appealed not to the senses but through the senses to man's deepest soul. Judging by these poems this same beauty could not in Keats' idea amount to anything more than a garb of external ornamentation for the earth and a bath of sensuous pleasure for the poet. His enervated diction was also poles asunder from the strong

and intense language which Wordsworth winnowed from the common speech and used for the expression of his best poetry. Neither in these earlier poems nor in any that followed did Keats come within the literary influence of Wordsworth.

In these minor poems this divergence from Wordsworth's principles is rendered all the more striking by the incontestable evidence they afford that Keats was directly acquainted with Wordsworth's poetry. Moreover the evidence is contained in these very two poems, the first and the last of the volume, "I stood tip toe upon a little hill," and "Sleep and Poetry." In the closing portion of the first poem Keats offers an explanation of the origin and significance of the Greek myth as Wordsworth had done in "The Excursion."⁽¹⁾ It is not a mere play of the fancy, he recognised, nor mere narrative. Its images and inventions are the expression of thoughts and experiences which being rare or transcendent would have preforce remained silent had they not had resort to this method of expression by circumlocution and analogy. The old Greeks even more so than we today had a language primarily adapted to little more than the needs of every day life. When therefore they were moved as by the beauty

(1) Bk. IV. Ll. 717-62, and 847-87.

and grandeur of natural phenomena, they were at a loss to express themselves directly. They had no words and phrases ready coined to fit the experience. The human mind, however, then as now had an instinctive bent to simile, and the old Greeks rounded the difficulty by expressing their experience by analogy with the things of ordinary life, attached to which they had a highly developed language. The ancients had no such deliberate understanding of the myth as this, but from their instinctive practice the myth arose to be, as we now conceive it, an imaginative story which in its narrative bodies forth an inner meaning. Keats had this conception of myth and it can hardly be doubted but that he owed it to Wordsworth. Hunt when reviewing the 1817 volume in his "Examiner" noted Keats' explanation as following the lines suggested by Wordsworth in a beautiful passage of his *Excursion*; and as Keats' friend it is to be imagined that he would have given the credit to Keats' originality had the explanation been the outcome of an independent study of Greek mythology.

The mere borrowing of the explanation from Wordsworth would however have been of little importance if nothing further came of it. But Keats having arrived at an understanding of the Greek myth proceeded to utilise this indirect mode of expression used in myth for much of his most serious work. By wide reading in the literature

of the Elizabethan Classical Renaissance he had stored his mind with many tales of the old mythology, and he used them to adumbrate his own thoughts and feelings, making narrative clothe an inner meaning. As Professor de Selincourt has shewn in his introduction to Keats' poems, behind the narratives of "Endymion," "Hyperion," and "The Vision of Hyperion" there can be traced a distinct current of thought which represents Keats' striving towards his ideal of

"a nobler life

Where I may find the agonies, the strife

Of human hearts."

In "The Vision of Hyperion" it is all too evident that he is employing the method of the myth. In portions of the narrative the underlying thought becomes so naked and deliberate that it loses in beauty and artistic force.

When dwelling upon one particular of a poets' work unless space is available to treat of all his poetry exhaustively, there is always great danger of seeing and representing this one detail out of perspective and with exaggeration. This holds of the instruction Keats received from Wordsworth upon the meaning and significance of the Greek myth. It must not be thought that in the later poems which Keats moulded after the manner of the myth, there can be traced any direct debt to Wordsworth. Nothing further from the truth could be imagined.

Wordsworth's influence on him is comprised in the afforded explanation. It must be regarded as one would regard the contours of the mountain side helping to decide the initial channel of a stream and, to this extent assisting to determine its future course. It was no confluent influence which swelled the poetry of Keats or altered its hue.

The other poem of the 1817 volume mentioned as giving direct evidence that Keats had a first hand knowledge of Wordsworth was "Sleep and Poetry," the last poem in the volume. The poem falls naturally into three parts. The first portion consisting of eighty-four lines is written in the vein of "I stood tip toe upon a little hill" and is abandoned to any easy enjoyment of Nature. The last part, which comprises lines 155-404 is opened by an attack from the Romantic standpoint upon Augustanism as exemplified in Boileau. From this the poet passes naturally to the delights of his own world and closes by recording long "trains of peaceful images" which represent these delights. The middle section of the poem, though the shortest, is by far the most interesting and important. It is nothing less than a description of Keats' poetic development as it had so far unrolled, as it was at that time developing, and as he hoped to be able to determine it in the future. This section beyond all doubt was

influenced by Wordsworth. He too in "Lines written above Tintern Abbey" outlines his development in three stages. Moreover some twelve months later on May 3rd, 1818 Keats writing to Reynolds returns to the subject and exhibits again, this time in prose simile, the development of his life in three stages and makes actual mention of Wordsworth's poem -

"I compare human life to a large mansion of many apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being yet shut upon me - The first we step into we call the Infant or Thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think - We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the second chamber remain wide open, shewing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it; but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of the thinking principle within us - we no sooner get into the second chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there for ever in delight. However among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of man - of convincing one's nerves that the world is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and Oppression - whereby this Chamber of Maiden-thought becomes gradually darkened, and at the same time, on all sides of it, many doors are set open - but all dark -

all leading to dark passages - we see not the balance of good and evil - we are in a mist - we are now in that state - we feel the "burden of the mystery." To this point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive, when he wrote "Tintern Abbey," and it seems to me that his genius is explorative of those dark passages."⁽¹⁾

This is virtually a repetition of the middle section of "Sleep and Poetry" "The infant or thoughtless chamber" corresponds to the life of

"A laughing schoolboy without grief or care

Riding the springy branches of an elm."⁽²⁾

In exact correspondence is that period of Wordsworth's life to which he refers in speaking of

"The coarser pleasures of my boyish days

And their glad animal movements."⁽³⁾

The second Chamber of Maiden-Thought and Keats' description of it are a brief note of the world he amplifies in lines 96 - 121 of "Sleep and Poetry" as a realm of luxurious delight in which he could enjoy a ten years' revelry. In "Tintern Abbey" Wordsworth records a corresponding second period but one in itself essentially different.

"I cannot paint

What then I was. The sounding cataract

(1) Buxton Forman. Vol. III. p. 153.

(2) Ll. 94-5.

(3) Ll. 73-4. Tintern Abbey.

Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me
 An appetite; a feeling and a love,
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, not any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye."⁽¹⁾

The third stage when the Chamber of Maiden-Thought becomes gradually darkened and labyrinthine passages open out into the mysteries of life, represents the perplexity still attendant upon the forward resolve which initiates in "Sleep and Poetry" the third stage of future development.

"And can I ever bid these joys farewell?
 Yes I must pass them for a nobler life
 Where I may find the agonies the strife
 Of human hearts."⁽²⁾

Wordsworth speaks of this third stage in a mood of conscious realisation. He had listened to "the still sad music of humanity" and finally had attained to

"a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."⁽³⁾

(1)L1.75-83.
 (2)L1.122-5.
 (3)L1.95-99.

There can hardly be any doubt that Keats in making this plan of his life's development was influenced by the example of Wordsworth. He accepted the example of a great man nobly striving with his full power of will and strength of foresight to the best end he knew; and it was probably in this mood that he spoke of "The Excursion" as a thing to rejoice at.⁽¹⁾ As we saw when studying Wordsworth, the "Ode upon Intimations of Immortality" contains within the lines

"In faith that looks through death

In years that bring the philosophic mind"

the very crux of the philosophy which strengthened the long years of Wordsworth. In one of his letters to Bailey Keats quotes this last line, and Lord Houghton says that Bailey vouches for Keats' great fondness for "The Intimations." "He was never ^{weary} tired of repeating it."⁽²⁾ To Keats the poem was redolent of a spirit that had conquered, which had successfully forced a way through those dark passages of the Third Chamber, and which had gained an insight into the "life of things,"

He himself was striving along the lines of his own genius to a corresponding goal. But the goal was not the same. Although accepting the example Keats was of too different and too independent a disposition to accept from Wordsworth the end that Wordsworth proposed to himself.

(1) Buxton Forman's Keats. Vol. III. p. 101.

(2) Buxton Forman's Keats. Vol. III. p. 92.

In fact he disagreed with Wordsworth in his ideal.

"As to the poetical Character itself," he says, "(I mean that sort, of which, if I am anything, I am a member; that sort as distinguished from the Wordsworthian or egoistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone), it is not itself - it has no self - It is everything and nothing - It has no character - it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated - It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen."(1)

This ideal of attaining to an outlook of perfect objectivity, a Protean quality of mind, Keats held before him as he wrote "Sleep and Poetry," "Endymion," "Hyperion," "King Stephen," "Otho the Great," and "The Vision of Hyperion." The trend of thought expressing this ideal has been fully traced through these works as we said by Professor de Selincourt in his introduction to Keats. For the purpose of this thesis it is sufficient to know without tracing the effort, that Keats pursued his ideal - the ideal given as his in the first paragraph of this chapter - with a Wordsworthian steadfastness. That the ideal was Shakespearean and not Wordsworthian matters not.

(1) Letter to Ric. Woodhouse. Oct. 27, 1818. Buxton Forman. Vol. III. p. 233.

The two poems we have examined, the first and the last of the 1817 volume give us the extent of Wordsworth's whole influence upon Keats. Keats ignored the example of Wordsworth's poetry but accepted his explanation of Greek myth; he refused to accept Wordsworth's ideal for his life's efforts, and yet copied his example in thoughtfully marking out his life's goal and striving towards it. In the one case he was guided in his use of the literature of the Elizabethan Classical Renaissance; in the other he was resolved to seek the Shakespearan ideal of life. Wordsworth and Keats trod different paths but the influence of the older poet assisted the younger to plant his feet ably and resolutely upon the path he had elected to follow. Without being any proof or offering any suggestions of Wordsworthian influence upon Keats there is a little reminiscence of Haydon's which yet seems to sum up the whole matter for us. "Keats was the only man I ever met with," he said, "who seemed and looked conscious of a high calling, except Wordsworth." (1) Thinking of them thus together, we cannot fail to remember what the older man did for the younger in leading him to mark out the mission of his life.

(1) Buxton Forman's Keats. Vol. IV. p. 349.

Chapter V.

Wordsworth's Influence upon P. B. Shelley.

Among the poets who strove in the great Romantic endeavour to breathe the air of Life more freshly and to know her great facts with a less sophisticated knowledge, Shelley was especially the idealist, and the prophet, the dreamer of perfect human love and flawless social life. But although by the essential disposition of his nature he belonged to the Romantic poets and stood among them the equal of any, yet in passing to him we become one step more removed from Wordsworth. Coleridge had been Wordsworth's greatest friend; Keats had been an acquaintance; Shelley never knew Wordsworth personally. There is every evidence that Shelley was thoroughly acquainted with Wordsworth's work; among his juvenilia is to be found almost side by side with "The Devil's Walk" imitated from Coleridge, the poem "Mother and Son" as obviously imitated from that vein of Wordsworth's poetry which delineates the love of mother for child; he quotes Wordsworth several times in his somewhat scanty correspondence. Among the works of his great period is "Peter Bell the Third" a mild satire which evinces as penetrating an understanding of Wordsworth as anything written before or since. However, not only the fact that the poets were strangers impresses us with the sense that

in turning to Shelley we pass one remove further from Wordsworth; but the difference between the two in their ideals is more strikingly apparent, although not more real, than that which separated Wordsworth from Coleridge and Keats. Wordsworth was concerned with his own personal ideal of attaining to a spiritual communion with Nature; and it was with justification that Keats summed up his achievement as attaining to "the egoistical sublime." On the other hand although Shelley too in much of his poetry was personal and subjective yet in a vast body of his writing he identified himself whole-heartedly with humanity as it strives to ameliorate its conditions and evolve a perfect organism of social life. From the scattered glimpses he obtained of a possible perfection he sought as an idealist in his poems of "Queen Mab," "The Revolt of Islam," and "Prometheus Unbound," to anticipate the passing of evil and the establishment upon earth of a Golden Age, or in Christian terms, of the Kingdom of Love. What O'Shaughnessy sang of all poets is of none so true as of Shelley -

"We are afar with the dawning
 And the suns that are not yet high,
 And out of the infinite morning
 Intrepid you hear us cry,
 How spite of your human scorning

Once more God's future draws nigh,
 And already goes forth the warning
 That ye of the past must die."

The ideals and aspirations which most properly belonged to Shelley were social and altruistic. It is claimed for him by many that he taught the very essence of Christianity, himself believing in the spirit of its religion although rejecting its dogmas and creed.

The heights to which Shelley aspired and to which he in measure attained were thus very different from those that Wordsworth sought, yet in one point their experiences agreed, that it is

"... the most difficult of tasks to keep

Heights which the soul is competent to gain."

Shelley in fact was unable to keep them. From heights of altruistic ideals he frequently fell into veritable abysses of personal yearning and grasping. The quotation from the Confessions of St. Augustine that he prefixed to *Alastor* rightly gives us insight into his nature -

"^{De}Quærebam quid amarem, et non enare." It is no exaggeration to say that his soul was the very spirit of love, longing to pour itself out and forget itself in love of another. When Shelley could engross himself with altruistic ideals and be thoroughly wrapped up in the cause of humanity as in "*Queen Mab*," "*Revolt of Islam*," "*Prometheus*

Unbound," he was happy. But his delicate susceptibilities were soon jarred by the world, his idealism prevented his ever being content with anything other than the highest, and in addition his life held quite the average proportion of sorrow and grief, which he was more capable of feeling than most man. The result was to drag him down from the heights of his ideals to the examination of his own griefs and fears and yearnings. The bitter incursions of hard fact as they came wrung from him notes of personal anguish, personal desire, and his powers were bent to satisfy the personal cravings of his own heart. In short his devotion to altruistic ideals alternated with fits of egoism, in which he wistfully dreamed of the satisfaction afforded by the ideal earthly love, or of that afforded by religion and philosophy. Particularly he reverted to these last. In many of their forms they of course offer an altruistic teaching, Shelley however sought them in those forms which gave a consolation to the heart craving for individual solace; he made quest for "the egoistical sublime." Indeed whenever rude incursions of bitter fact cast him from the heights of social ideals to which during a period of lofty composition he had attained, he reverted to Wordsworthian trains of thought in the hope of finding strength and consolation. Let us now seek to trace these soarings and depressions of his spirit and the attendant

resort he had to Wordsworth.

Putting aside the scraps and experiments that comprise the juvenilia of his poetry Shelley's first considerable work was his "Queen Mab." The poem is very representative of his life as he had then lived it; it embodies the spirit which animated him in his revolt against fagging at Eton, which led him to promulgate the "Necessity for Atheism" at Oxford; which made him espouse the cause of democracy at the University, and lastly the spirit which sanctioned his elopement with Harriet Westbrook as an avowal of his own freedom and a liberation of the girl from parental tyranny. The work is animated by two principles, a passionate worship of Liberty and a belief in Reason as able to exert a sovereign sway over men were they not profoundly ignorant. It was only ignorance which prevented the establishment of the Golden Age of innocence and happiness. In splendid verse if not great poetry Shelley depicts the conditions that would prevail in this felicitous age. Needless to say this trust in Reason is fallacious; Reason has no undisputed sovereignty even over a cultured humanity. As long as men are men, within their breasts is a seething flood of volcanic energy all compact of instinctive passions and emotions, which at least are recalcitrant to Reason. Two years after he had built it,

this world of Shelley's "Queen Mab" was shivered asunder and swept away like wrack before the wind. His own passions broke the delicate bubble of his dreams. He found that his marriage with Harriet although he had entered into it moved by his ideals of love and Liberty, was the most irksome of bondages, a veritable death in life; and further he found that despite all the causes Reason could allege as to the imprudence and inadvisability of the passion, he and Mary Godwin were overwhelmingly enamoured of each other. The other principle of his "Queen Mab" Liberty, as he conceived it, however sanctioned their union and they eloped. The results that ensued were very different from the happiness of liberty he had prophesied in the Golden Age of "Queen Mab;" his own home was of course broken up and Harriet abandoned; sorrow and anguish were brought permanently into the family of the Westbrooks, even the Godwins were perturbed. Moreover even for the principal ~~act~~ actors this upheaval did not produce results of unalloyed joy. Mary as we learn from her letters and diary was jealous of Claire Clairmont her half-sister and bosom friend, whom Shelley accepted as a companion in his higher pursuits and studies. Mary naturally thought that their union fell short of the ideal when he was thus ready to extend so great a sympathy to another woman. She had expected to be all in all to him; the very complement of his soul. As for Shelley

in the quiet retreat of his home at Bishopsgate the first poem he wrote was "Alastor." The preface indeed condemns the attitude to life delineated in the poem, and some may be found to urge that it was the settled happiness of his earthly love for Mary Godwin, which led him to depict the tragedy of the idealist unable to focus upon earth his ideals of love. But if his love was so perfect whence came the inspiration which could make him write this poem, lyrical in tone, marvellous in execution, and pierced through and through with poignant regret and yearning? There is only one explanation; Shelley had not realised his ideal and he knew it. Without being oppressed by any deep grief or great anxiety, he saw that the "broken arcs of earth" were for him still broken. He had travelled a long way since he pronounced the possible cure of the world in "Queen Mab;" once again he was groping for the secret of life, his heart eaten up with an unutterable yearning, his life fermenting with a divine discontent. Significantly at this time we find him studying Wordsworth - Wordsworth who taught that man may by the springs of power within himself rise superior to a world inadequate to console him. One point of immediate evidence that he was making this study of Wordsworth is afforded by the quotation in the preface to "Alastor" from "The Excursion" -

"... the good die first,

And those whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket."⁽¹⁾

Shelley's own health was very precarious at the time and he probably culled the quotation feeling that he himself would shortly die, if not as one of the good yet certainly as one whose heart had not been dry but ready with a rich love of others. Internal evidence is also far from scanty, that "Alastor" was written while studying Wordsworth.

At the close of the poem there is an acknowledged borrowing from the "Intimations" of "too deep for tears;" and at the beginning two unacknowledged and apparently unconscious reminiscences of the phrase "natural piety" from "My heart leaps up when I behold," of "obstinate questionings," from "The Intimations." Such a phrase as "the deep heart of man" in line 49 also strikes one as having a Wordsworthian ring, while the two closing lines of the poem, although they have no exact correspondence with Wordsworth are yet strongly reminiscent of the sentiment of the "Intimations" in the opening four stanzas -

"Nature's vast frame, the web of human things

Birth and the grave, that are not as they were."

Along with "Alastor" another short blank verse poem "The Sunset" written at the same time shows decided traces of Wordsworth's influence.

(1) Bk. I. Ll. 500-502.

"The sun had sunk, but lines of gold
Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points
Of the far level grass and nodding flowers
And the old dandelion's hoary beard."⁽¹⁾

The faithful observation and delicate presentation of these minute items of nature are perfectly in the Wordsworthian manner. Except towards the end, the poem generally and particularly lines 25-33 by simplicity of diction, and by restraint and bareness of style gives evidence of having been written under the influence of Wordsworth. The significance of this study of Wordsworth does not however appear in full until the ill-health, which, as we saw, possibly influenced him in selecting the quotation from "The Excursion," had compelled him to leave England for Switzerland and Italy. It was in the works written there in 1816 "The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," and "Mont Blanc," that the influence of Wordsworth became weighty and resulted in more than mere incidental reminiscences and imitation. No longer engrossed in social aspirations by the early ideals of his "Queen Mab," conscious that although he cared for Mary Godwin yet he lacked that ideal mate, the veritable love's avatar, he cast round for spiritual consolation and tried to realise a faith. "The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" is the outcome of this endeavour, and one of the

(1)Ll. 12-15.

most direct expressions he ever gave to any passages of his spiritual life. The poem dwells upon a moment of rare ecstacy which revealed to him heaven and earth in a new aspect.. The ecstacy gave pause to the Alastorlike questings of his spirit; transcended the tangle of human vicissitudes and impressed him with the thought that of all things it alone could give "grace and truth to life's unquiet dream." Unquestionably it was one of those transcendental moments which, as in the case of Wordsworth, lift "the burthen of the mystery" and bring to man a sense that this world is indeed his home, not a merely material, lifeless and so uncongenial abode, but one pervaded by a mysterious all-comprehensive life on whose bosom his spirit may rest content. Remembering however that Wordsworth was a sworn foe to Intellectualism, the name of "Intellectual Beauty" given by Shelley to the aspect of nature revealed by this ecstacy, should make us pause ere hastening to attribute the Hymn to Wordsworth's influence. In fact, Wordsworth was not, at first view, the chief influence that in confluence with Shelley's own inspiration produced this poem, but Plato. This same term, "Intellectual Beauty" occurs in the translation that Shelley made two years later of "The Symposium." In important particulars the expositions of the Intellectual Beauty given by Shelley and Socrates in "The Hymn" and "The Symposium" respectively also agree. Both find it when in

the presence of beautiful objects and both alike in sudden fashion. The grace and truth we prize in the objects of ordinary experience, both think of as due to some subtle participation in this essential beauty. Moreover both alike are impressed by the transcendental life possible to that man whose eyes are ever open to the vision. But while Shelley owed this debt to Plato, he also owed one to Wordsworth. Plato and Shelley both found the Intellectual Beauty when in the presence of beautiful objects; but there was a great difference in these objects of their regard. Socrates who represents Plato, says in the *Phaedrus*,

"Now trees, you know, and fields cannot teach me anything, but men in the city can."⁽¹⁾

To attach a spiritual significance to nature is a comparatively modern idea; Plato made the ascent to the Intellectual Beauty by the contemplation first of beautiful forms and then chiefly of the beauties of the mind and character. Shelley made the ascent

"When musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing
All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming."⁽²⁾

(1)p.210. Five Dialogues of Plato. Everyman Edition.
(2)Hymn to Intellectual Beauty. St.V.

This ecstasy is associated in his memory with the beautiful objects of nature. In this respect he is following not Plato but Wordsworth, the master spirit of the Romantic poetry of Nature. Further in this poem Shelley is writing from an "emotion recollected in tranquillity" and from one which refers back to an experience of Shelley's "while yet a boy." It was probably the remembrance of how great a significance Wordsworth attached to the impressions of his own childhood, that led Shelley to revive and ponder this past experience of his own youth. In the last great poem written, "Alastor," are there not three reminiscences of the "Intimations" which more than any other poems testifies to the belief Wordsworth had in the significance of his early experiences? Shelley owes no mean debt to Wordsworth, a debt probably greater than the one to Plato, for although Plato's influence greatly colours "The Hymn," yet Wordsworth probably led him to revive the old ecstatic experience which is the root of the poem, and so in a way determined that the poem should be written. Plato's influence is more incidental than Wordsworth's which goes back a long way towards being ultimate.

In "The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" Shelley we said was casting round for spiritual consolation and was seeking to realise a faith; we have just seen how in this endeavour and in this poem he was influenced by Plato and

Wordsworth. In the companion poem "Mont Blanc" he continued his search, but the joint influence that marked the earlier poem yields to one wholly Wordsworthian. There is no trace of Platonism, but, in the first lines, in the last, and in the body of the poem the influence of Wordsworth is all-apparent.

"The everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark - now glittering - now reflecting gloom -
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings
Of waters - with a sound but half its own."(1)

This is nothing else than a restatement in combination, of that passage in the introduction to the Excursion which ponders

"How exquisitely the individual Mind
to the external world

Is fitted - and how exquisitely too -

The external world is fitted to the mind,"
and of the idea in "Tintern Abbey" of how human experience
is composed of what the senses

"Half perceive and what create."

More towards the heart of the poem, in lines 27-29 the
sense Shelley has of

"the strange sleep

Which when the voices of the desert fall
Wraps all in its own deep eternity"(1)
is very similar to Wordsworth's sense of

"The sleep that is among the lonely hills."(2)
Again still later in the poem, the lines he addresses in
direct speech to Mont Blanc, might very well have been
written by Wordsworth himself as a shining exemplification
of "the moral relations under which I have wished to
exhibit its (Nature's) most ordinary appearances."(3)

"Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
By all, but which the wise and great and good
Interpret or make felt or deeply feel."(4)

Finally the last six lines of the poem put it beyond all
doubt that Shelley was aiming to attain Wordsworth's
attitude to Nature and to capture his sense of her secret
life

"The secret strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy?"

(1)Ll.27-29.

(2)Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle. L.164.

(3)See antea. p32.

(4)Ll.30-3.

This may be compared with the passage in "Tintern Abbey" - too well known to need quotation - where Wordsworth speaks of the sense he had that within earth, and sky, and sea, and the mind of man, was some subtle and all essential spirituality only dimly comprehended by him, but which he feels is at once the life and soul and strength of all.

About the year 1816 we see then that Shelley followed Wordsworth in seeking to attain to "egoistical sublimity," when his own social aspirations and ideals had failed to engross him and give him the happiness of self oblivion.

This visit to Switzerland and Italy in 1816 greatly benefitted Shelley. He returned restored in mind and body and all alive with energy and ⁿenthusiasm to write a great poem social in its subject and ideals. The process of his recovery is narrated in the first canto of the "Revolt of Islam," where Shelley makes the beautiful lady, who introduced the poet into the presence of Laon, relate how in a vision a spirit visited her

"And said "A spirit loves thee, mortal maiden,
How wilt thou prove thy worth?" Then joy and sleep
Together fled, my soul was deeply laden,
And to the shore I went to muse and weep;
But as I moved, over my heart did creep
A joy less soft, but more profound and strong

Than my sweet dream; and it forbade to keep
The path of the sea-shore: that Spirit's tongue
 Seemed whispering in my heart, and bore my steps along.

How, to that vast and peopled city led,
 Which was a field of holy warfare then,
 I walked among the dying and the dead,
 And shared in fearless deeds with evil man,
 Calm as an angel in the dragon's den -
 How I braved death for liberty and truth,
 And spurned at peace, and power, and fame - and when
Those hopes had lost the glory of their youth,
How sadly I returned - might move the hearer's ruth:

Warm tears throng fast! the tale may not be said -
 Know then, that when this grief had been subdued,
 I was not left, like others, cold and dead;
The spirit whom I loved in solitude
Sustained his child: the tempest-shaken wood,
The waves, the fountains, and the hush of night -
These were his voice, and well I understood
His smile divine, when the calm sea was bright
With silent tears and Heaven was breathless with
delight."⁽¹⁾

These stanzas are closely autobiographical. The visitant of the dream was the veritable spirit of love visiting Shelley to deter him from a selfish and egoistical luxuriation in

(1)R. of Islam. C.I. xliii-xlv.

his own pantheistic and platonic ecstasies. It led him from the lone shore of contemplation and reverie to work amid the suffering myriads of men. "Queen Mab" embodies the spirit of Shelley's endeavours under this influence. When these social hopes had lost the glory of their youth, through the great failure of the French Revolution, and through the personal troubles which bent his thoughts and care upon his own heart and its yearnings, Shelley like the Lady sadly returned whence he had set out, to the lone shore of contemplation. But he was not left "cold and dead," the spirit whom he loved and had known in his early ecstasies comforted him, strengthened him, spoke to him with all the voices of Mighty Nature and smiled upon him through Nature's beauteous features. This represents the spiritual recovery that Shelley had recently made in Switzerland and Italy, with the aid of Wordsworth and Plato.

The work which Shelley produced in the new enthusiasm of recovering the social ideals and aspirations which were most truly his own, was this story of Laon and Cythna, "The Revolt of Islam." The theme is the power true love has to rise superior to all circumstances, and to live on amid the battle shocks of pain, adversity and human sin. Even death cannot conquer it, cannot change loving into unloving, it can only make a cold arrest upon it, and bring it to an end. As long as they lived Laon and Cythna loved on, and Shelley

intended the spectacle of their unsubduable love to afford a promise, that love working as a leaven would some day overcome all the evil of the world. Once again he was sounding "the trumpet of a prophecy" in the hope of encouraging his fellow man, once again social ideals and aspirations held him. But even as he wrote this poem in the summer of 1817, events were weighing upon him that should crush his joyous enthusiasm and plunge him once more into the gropings of personal care and personal solicitude. He was to be plunged once more into egoism. At the end of 1816 his wife committed suicide under most painful circumstances; the tragedy of her end convulsed Shelley's very soul; he must have reflected that her early love for him was the first step along the way to this shameful death. The children that she had borne him he was unable to recover from her relatives the Westbrooks; Lord Eldon in Chancery decided that he was not fit to care for them. Fanny Godwin his sister-in-law and friend died; Claire Clairmont, another quasi-sister-in-law, after being deserted by Byron, bore her deserter a child, and fell back upon Shelley for support. The ill health that had before troubled him reappeared and was apparently consumption - a certain feverishness traceable in the "Revolt of Islam" was due to his writing in the fear of an early death. He also became obsessed with the thought that the two children of his union with Mary Godwin

would be removed from his care, and that he would thus lose them all. Accordingly in 1817 in fear both for his own life and for his children he returned once more to Italy, leaving England for ever. Sorrow crossed with him, for in Italy both his children died. The "Lines written among the Euganean Hills" in October 1818 between their deaths, serve to shew to what depth of misery the poet was hurled; how much he was thrust back upon himself and made to feed upon his own heart. The forlorn hope that

"Many a green isle needs must be

In the deep wide sea of misery,"

and the forlorn endeavour to place himself upon one of these "flowering islands" in "the waters of wide Agony" are more eloquent than any direct lamentation or dirge.

In the midst of these sorrows we find Shelley turning once again for strength to a vein of Wordsworthian thought. He endeavoured to muster all his strength of soul, that he might bear up bravely and not look upon the whole world with jaundiced eyes, just because it went ill in his little section. In conversation with Byron in "Julian and Maddalo" he reverts to the belief in which Wordsworth had directed his own life, and which was the core of all the strength within his Happy Warrior,

"Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,

And Fear and Bloodshed, miserable train!

Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
 In face of these doth exercise a power
 Which is our human nature's highest dower;
 Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
 Of their bad influence and their good receives."⁽¹⁾

The mind from the most glorious of its experiences evolves its ideals. These it possesses within the fastnesses of its being and if it hold them firm, however ill immediate things may go, it will still be able to look on the world and life with unprejudiced eye as a place in which beauty, truth and love do indeed exist, though at times obscured by the passing clouds. In "Julian and Maddalo," Shelley, as Julian, says

"... it is our will
 Which thus enchains us to permitted ill -
 We might be otherwise - we might be all
 We dream of happy, high, majestic.
 Where is the love, beauty and truth we seek
 But in our minds? and if we were not weak
 Should we be less in deed than in desire?"
 "Ay if we were not weak - and we aspire
 How vainly! to be strong," said Maddalo:
 "You talk Utopia." "It remains to know,"
 I then rejoined, "and those who try may find

(1)L1.12-18.

How strong the chains are which our spirit bind;
 Brittle perchance as straw..... We are assured
 Much may be conquered, much may be endured,
 Of what degrades and crushes us. We know
 That we have power over ourselves to do
 And suffer - what, we know not till we try,
 But something nobler than to live and die."⁽¹⁾

Shelley is fighting again Wordsworth's crusade of deliberate optimism, he is making a volitional effort to see the world continually in the light of the ideals based upon the experience of his "godlike hours." Just as before the influence of Wordsworth was mingled with that of Plato; so here we find in conjunction with this Wordsworthian doctrine, considerable trace of the old classical stoicism; giving it an even greater austerity of strength.

Following upon the rallying of the strength deep within himself, external events took a better turn for Shelley; his horizon cleared greatly. His own health improved; another child relieved the loneliness of himself and Mary now his legal wife; they found fresh friends. The period of his greatest poetic production now follows and perhaps the period of his greatest happiness. But however much external events may have reacted to produce these results, he owed much to that rally of his inner strength begun in "Julian and Maddalo." He carried on this effort

(1)ll. 170-187.

to a consummation^m in his greatest work. In "Prometheus Unbound" we have all his former lyric love, all his sense of what great social transformations love could work and in addition, that great central pillar of strength expressed as the philosophy of Demogorgon, but which was also intended as the philosophy of the whole poem, and of Shelley himself at that time. He had developed it from the beginning he made in "Julian and Maddalo."

"To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
 To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
 To defy Power, which seems omnipotent,
 To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
 From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
 Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
 This, like the glory, Titian, is to be
 Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
 This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory." (1)

In the principle

"To defy Power which seems omnipotent;
 To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
 From its own wreck the thing it contemplates"

is reborn again that power of the Happy Warrior over adverse circumstances, which

"Controls them and subdues, transmutes bereaves

(1) Prometheus Unbound - last stanza.

Of their bad influence and their good receives."

This element of Wordsworthianism is again accompanied by a modicum of classical stoicism. The fourth act of

"Prometheus Unbound" which closes with this sublime expression of Shelley's philosophy was written in the mid-winter of 1819. In the following October Shelley wrote his "Peter Bell the Third," a satire on Wordsworth.

Shelley was furiously angry with him for the reactionary way in which he had worked against the cause of democracy at the Westmoreland election; in a letter to Peacock on the occasion he refers to him as "a beastly and pitiful wretch."

Not for a moment however did he let this obscure his appreciation of Wordsworth's poetry; following this expression he continues "that such a man should be such a poet," and it is interesting to note that even in the satire, when he comes to speak of that power of Wordsworth's mind, whose method he had so recently followed, the power of mind to remould its experience according to its ideal; he speaks of it in a sober stanza:

"Yet his was individual mind,
And new created all he saw
In a new manner, and refined
Those new creations, and combined
Them, by a master-spirit's law."⁽¹⁾

(1) Peter Bell the Third. Pt. IV. Stanza IX.

As in "The Hymn" and "Mt. Blanc," for a second time Shelley raised himself from a depth of personal despair by pursuing a vein of Wordsworthian thought, but in this case his indebtedness to Wordsworth becomes less distinct and we trace it with less certainty than before. There is always the danger that a vein of thought we now exclusively call Wordsworthian is only so called, because he was the master spirit that worked it. Other minds may have striven to refine it. Wordsworth may not altogether have "created the taste by which he was enjoyed." We have then no inevitable scientific proof that in "Julian and Maddalo" and in "Prometheus Unbound" Shelley is indebted to Wordsworth - but this we know, that the lines Shelley pursued had already been traced out by Wordsworth as their greatest exponent and expressed in his poetry; also we know that for this poetry Shelley had a great and seasoned admiration, and perfectly understood the workings of Wordsworth's thought as therein manifested. Without irrationality therefore we may surmise - although not having it as a proven fact - that Wordsworth assisted to give Shelley his grasp of the philosophical ideas of "Julian and Maddalo" and the closing utterance of "Prometheus Unbound".

During the period of poetic production opened by "Prometheus Unbound" (1818-19) Shelley maintained a self-

forgetting serenity of mind, and avoided the gnawings of egoism for a longer time than ever before. He wrote his great drama "The Cenci" (1819) an objective work needless to say; social interests and ideals engrossed him as in the "Odes to Naples" (1820), and to Liberty (1820), or as in the "Ode to ^{The Vest Bird} ~~Autumn~~" (1819) in which the hope that he may be a benefit to mankind enables him to transcend personal sorrow; light and happy moods were his as in the "Letter to Maria Gisborne" (1820), which reveals him as a contented man in easy relaxation at home, or as in "The Witch of Atlas" (1820) where his imagination sports like a child in the meadows. But with "The Sensitive Plant," (1820), the old note of sadness begins to creep again into his poetry. Shelley is the sensitive plant distraught with the yearning to love and be loved. There were outward troubles to disturb his serenity. Claire Clairmont was frantically seeking to see her child Allegra again, and to have her removed from the unhealthy convent where her father had lodged her. She used Shelley as an emissary to Byron but in vain. The only result was to work Shelley up into unwholesome excitement and paroxysms of passion at Byron's callousness and cruelty. Allegra died. The grossest scandal was abroad connecting his name with Claire's and attributing to him the most monstrous conduct. His own health had again broken down. Finally he once more lost his contentedness

of spirit, for in Emilia Vivani¹ he thought he had found his veritable love's avatar and within his mind went sounding on the long chase of the ideal love. "Epipsychidion" (1821), and the famous poetrait of himself in "Adonais," (1821), respectively reveal him as having lost self-mastery and contentedness of spirit, and as being enveloped once more in sorrow and disquietude. Shelley was always sympathetic to others but he took up the sad theme of Keats' death partly because it fell in so well with his own mood at the time. The sublime philosophy which closed the "Prometheus Unbound" had failed to save him permanently, or rather he had failed to maintain it within his own life. In the works of his last few months we find him preparing to battle once more to force some line of passage through life. He was endeavouring once more to escape from the gnawing egoism which sapped and absorbed all his powers. In "Hellas" (1821), we find him engrossing himself in the social and altruistic ideals which we have before said were most properly his own. Significantly we again find traces of Wordsworth's influence, and in particular reminiscences from "Tintern Abbey", that supreme exposition of Wordsworth's natural religion and philosophy of life; thus in lines 23-27 of the prologue he speaks of

"an atmosphere of living spirit

"Which interpenetrating all the....

it rolls from realm to realm

And age to age and in its ebb and flow
 Impels the generations
 To their appointed place,"

and in line 106 of the prologue he speaks of

"the omnipotence of God
 Which sweeps through all things."

Taking this in connection with other slight pieces it would appear that he was again resorting to the thought of Wordsworth in order to calm the cravings of his too sensitive egoism. By so doing he did not cease to be egoistical, but, to echo Wordsworth's words, he was "detaching his affections from the treasures of time to settle them upon those of eternity." It was this that with Wordsworth's help he had before endeavoured to do in "The Hymn" and "Mont Blanc". In "The Zucco"⁽¹⁸²²⁾ indeed he yearns back to the attitude to nature, and to the mood of mind that were his when he wrote "Mont Blanc." The pantheism is also permeated with the thought and spirit of Christianity; the Spirit of Nature becomes the Spirit of Love:

"I loved, I know not what - but this low sphere
 And all that it contains, contains not thee.
 Thou, whom seen nowhere, I feel everywhere.

 In winds, and trees, and streams, and all things common,
 In music and the sweet unconscious tone
 Of animals, and voices which are human,

Meant to express some feeling of their own;
 In the soft motions and rare smile of woman,
 In flowers and leaves, and in the grass fresh-shown,
 Or dying in the autumn, I the most

Adore thee present or lament thee lost."⁽¹⁾

(Published 1821)

Shelley's famous "Lament" is a more lyrical and poignant expression of the sentiment which moved Wordsworth to write the first four stanzas of "The Intimations."

"O world! of life! O time!
 On whose last steps I climb,
 Trembling at that where I had stood before;
 When will return the glory of your prime?

No more - Oh, never more!

Out of the day and night
 A joy has taken flight;
 Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
 Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight

No more - Oh, never more!"

For Wordsworth the despondency was only temporary and he finally finished his "Intimations" in a strain of triumphant joy; Shelley too perhaps, had he had the time given him, might once more, and perhaps permanently, have risen triumphant above this despair.

At the time of his death Shelley was also trying another line of thought and endeavour to gain some clue to

the problem of "How to live?" This path led inwards to his own soul. The "Triumph of Life" shews him bent once more upon stern self examination. But his examination never got beyond the question "What is life?" Unless Death taught him he never knew. This last fragment contains no element derived from or moulded by Wordsworth, but "Hellas," "The Zucca," and "A Lament," shew one half of Shelley's endeavour to shape his life as being once again a reversion to lines of thought first traced out and made known to him by Wordsworth.

There only remains to be considered whether Wordsworth had any literary influence upon Shelley. General considerations of the two poets will largely rule out the possibility of this. Wordsworth however we may describe him cannot be styled in unqualified fashion a lyrical poet. This is the title which suits Shelley best. He is the greatest of English lyrists and among the three or four greatest of the world. He and Wordsworth are thus essentially different in their poetical natures. Moreover lyrical poetry in proportion as it is great is spontaneous and original. It is the most difficult of tasks in matters of technique to be a lyrical plagiarist. In accordance with this and with his lyrical genius, the poetry of Shelley among that of all the great poets least shews traces of the literary influence of other poets, among

whom of course Wordsworth is included. Prompted by the broad evidence that "Alastor" was composed while Shelley was studying Wordsworth, then unrivalled as the greatest writer of blank verse since Milton, some critics seek to trace a literary influence from Wordsworth upon Shelley's blank verse. The reminiscences in this poem from Wordsworth are however all from poems in stanza, none from blank verse poems. Moreover it seems to me that Shelley's blank verse is quite different from Wordsworth's. Its diction is richer, its imagery more profuse, it moves with greater and more varied modulation, it is more musical. Shelley's blank verse in "Alastor" appears to me to be essentially the blank verse of a lyrical poet.

In "The Sunset" already mentioned as written at the same time as "Alastor" and as affording evidence of Wordsworth's influence, there may be found however blank verse very much alike to Wordsworth's.

"That night the youth and lady mingled lay
 In love and sleep - but when the morning came
 The lady found her lover dead and cold.
 Let none believe that God in mercy gave
 That stroke. The lady died not, nor grew wild,
 But year by year lived on - in truth I think
 Her gentleness and patience and sad smiles,
 And that she did not die, but lived to tend
 Her aged father, were a kind of madness,

If madness 'tis to be unlike the world."⁽¹⁾

The decasyllabic iambs of "Mont Blanc" while not actually blank verse since they repeatedly fall into couplets and quatrains are yet very much the same in their effect, for no poet has so great a power of unobtrusive riming as Shelley. It is thus permissible to compare them with Wordsworth's regular blank verse, and although neither in diction nor in phrasing are they so simple, yet many passages are reminiscent of him in effect, as the following already quoted for its similarity of sentiment -

"Thou hast a voice great mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel." (2).

"Mont Blanc" however we have seen was the culmination of a deliberate attempt to attain an outlook upon nature the same as was Wordsworth's. This deliberate discipleship also extended to an imitation of Wordsworth's verse. Shelley does not use verse Wordsworthian in tone unless he is approximating to Wordsworth in the treatment of his subject as in the portion quoted from "The Sunset," or unless his thought is Wordsworthian as in "Mont Blanc." The influence is quite transitory, almost as much so as that which made him attempt to write "Mother and Son" in Wordsworthian style and diction.

There are certain resemblances in Shelley's

(1) ll 24-33.

(2) ll 90-93.

Introduction to the "Revolt of Islam" to the poetic theory Wordsworth elaborated in his famous Preface; thus he says

"... I have chosen a story of human passion in its most universal character... appealing... to the common sympathies of every human breast."

"I have sought to avoid the imitation of any style of language or versification peculiar to the original minds of which it is the character... I have simply clothed my thoughts in what appeared to me the most obvious and appropriate language."

Probably on the strength of this resemblance "The Quarterly" when reviewing "The Revolt of Islam" accused Shelley of imitating Wordsworth. He expressly denied it in a letter of October 15th, 1819,⁽¹⁾ to Charles and James Ollier, at the same time making once more the admission as in the preface to "The Revolt of Islam", that between authors of the same period, the common age they write in may produce an unconscious and inevitable resemblance. The truths contained in Shelley's Introduction probably appeared to him truisms of poetic theory as they would to any fresh and great poetic mind. Shelley's denial stands then as the final word, that he did not imitate Wordsworth in "The Revolt of Islam."

To sum up; the influence of Wordsworth upon Shelley is traceable in one poem of his Juvenilia and during

(1)p.728. Letters of Shelley. ed. by Ingpen.

three periods of his career, when in revulsion from the gnawings of an unsatisfied egoism he strove to find some solution or philosophy of life. In these four cases the debt is one of thought; in the first two there is also a transient literary influence upon his poetic technique.

CHAPTER VI.

Wordsworth's Influence upon George Gordon,Lord Byron.

After having noted how in the cases of Coleridge, Keats, ^{etc.} Shelley, the influence of Wordsworth by successive stages becomes less distinct and more intangible, the critic on coming to Byron is tempted to announce a fourth stage when Wordsworth's influence though manifest is even one degree more removed. The statement is however hardly worth making; for the distinction of Byron's genius is so heavily marked in its difference from Wordsworth's, that in prelude to what little may be said, the best statement is that Byron and Wordsworth followed distinct paths through the realms of poetry. ^PIf we go back far enough in the Romantic Movement with which they were both unquestionably identified, we may indeed accord them a joint literary predecessor.-----

----- To the extent that each is a poet of human nature, their works may be considered as convergent developments from the poetry of Burns. This poet in writing of peasants and of human passion was certainly labouring to prepare the way for Wordsworth] who was afterwards to write of "humble and

rustic life" and of "the essential passions of the heart." As the poet of passion and love he is also the nearest literary fore-runner of Byron; and in his sturdy declarations of liberty and independence such as "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled" and "For a' that and a' that" he is likewise preparing the path for Byron's vehement and unrestrained assertions of liberty. To make this examination of Wordsworth and Byron, and to mark the common point whence their poetry has diverged in the organic development of English Literature as a whole, is however only the more strongly to exhibit the tremendous difference between the two. They both wrote of "the essential passions of the human heart." But whereas for Wordsworth the term comprised the deep spiritual movements of our being, and emotions the least ebullient and violent, for Byron this definition of his poetry's scope had its ordinary everyday significance, and amounted in essential to no more than "everyday" passions such as that, to give the supreme instance, which links the sexes. As a result while Wordsworth's poetry is calm, spiritual and sublimely egoistical, in the sense that the subjective yearnings of the individual are towards a greater Being without itself; Byron's on the other hand is turbulent, animated by animal zest, and narrowly egoistical; - and this narrow egoism, as an inevitable corollary is accompanied by

loneliness, by profound dissatisfaction, by an overwhelming sense of the emptiness of life. This last trait of narrow egoism also appears in his assertions of liberty, which in ideal was for him a personal freedom absolutely devoid of all restraint. With Wordsworth it was not so. In his conception, liberty was one of the cardinal principles of the world, not to be forgotten even by "a breathing of the common wind" & having for friends & allies

" exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind"⁽¹⁾

How then, we have to ask, can Wordsworth have influenced Byron with this great difference yawning between them? The answer is simply, that Byron in his reading and conversations had, according to the vulgar phrase, "picked up" some of ~~Wor~~ Wordsworth's ideas. And these ideas were not from Wordsworth the poet of man, but from him as the poet of Nature. The admirers of Byron will probably quarrel with the phrase - "picked up" containing as it does an implication of appropriation of ideas, and a superficial appropriation at that. But in general it seems fair to me. Byron's genius was not philosophical, witness the poor thinking displayed in "Cain"; nor was it as I can see spiritual. A truly and deeply spiritual person does not revel in sensuality to the extent that Byron did both as a poet and a man. I therefore

(1) To Toussaint L'Ouverture 11.13-14.

wish to convey that Byron "picked up", had on the whole, casually appropriated the element spiritually and philosophically appreciative of nature, that appears to a slight extent in his work. It is not that Byron is crudely and closely imitative of Wordsworth - he indeed generally varies from Wordsworth in preferring the wilder aspects of nature to her more peaceful - but this pantheism never seems to me a natural and inevitable development of his genius; it seldom seems to be fed by springs of perpetual power welling from the man's innermost being. Not always by any means does it have the indubitable ring of sincerity; quite often it is rather feeble; and forceful and impressive expression is not infrequently accompanied by a suggestive taint of rhetoricalness. In short it seems exactly as though "picked up" during the height of a vogue. It thus appears permissible to say that had there been no Wordsworth, to cause such cogitations, criticisms and heart-searchings in literary circles, this element would have been lacking in Byron's work. The following stanza is an average example.

"Dear Nature is the kindest mother still,
Though always changing in her aspect mild;
From her bare bosom let me take my fill,

Her never-wean'd, though not her favour'd child.
 Oh! she is fairest in her features wild,
 Where nothing polish'd dares pollute her path:
 To me by day or night she ever smiled,
 Though I have mark'd her when none other hath,
 And sought her more and more, and loved her best
 in wrath."⁽¹⁾

It is necessary to place Shelley's name beside Wordsworth's, and say also that ~~had~~ there been no Shelley, this element appreciative of Nature would have been lacking in Byron's poetry. Whereas we get no passages in Canto I. of Childe Harold and only two or three in Canto II. that at all betray the influence of Wordsworth in Canto III, which was

(1)Childe Harold's Pilgrimage II SXXXVII.

completed in 1816 while Byron was enjoying frequent intercourse with Shelley, there are numerous and weighty passages which evince a certain debt to Wordsworth. Moreover as evidence that Wordsworth did influence Byron via Shelley we have Byron's remark, recorded by Medwin, that at this time Shelley "had dosed him with Wordsworth even to nausea" (1)

----- Shelley as we have seen was absorbed in Wordsworthianism particularly in 1816 when he wrote "The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" and "Mont Blanc".^P There are two points which indicate a stronger and perhaps a more direct influence of Wordsworth upon Byron; it is even permissible to wonder whether Byron was led to study him for himself. The first of these indications is a peculiar turn of expression, reminiscent of Wordsworth, which occurs in a passage itself betraying the influence of Shelley,

"I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling; but the hum
Of human cities torture:" (2)

The identification of Self with a larger Being without the individual is essentially Shelleyan, ~~and Wordsworthian~~ in its pantheism. The chief point of interest is however

(1) Quoted Dictionary of National Biography. Vol. VIII. p. 145. in Life of George Gordon Lord Byron.
(2) Child Harold's Pilgrimage. Canto III. St. XII.

the statement that "High mountains are a feeling." It is as we said rather a peculiar turn of expression and somewhat meaningly except to a Wordsworthian who remembers how in The Tintern Abbey poem Wordsworth tells us -

"The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
 The mountain and the deep and gloomy wood,
 Their colours and their forms were then to me
 An appetite; a feeling and a love" -(1)

In this same poem Wordsworth also speaks of "the din of towns and cities."⁽²⁾ which Byron also objects to in the quotation just given. Seeing how freely and greatly Wordsworth delivers himself therein, ^{"Tintern Abbey"} was probably a recurrent dose in Shelley's inflictions upon Byron. Byron must have studied it for himself. The other point that seems to indicate in this Canto III. that Wordsworth was exercising a stronger and more direct influence upon Byron, is that the latter's nature poetry is finer and more sincere where it deals with the tranquil aspect of nature, - such as Wordsworth viewed, - than where with her stormier side, which Byron had avowed as having an especial charm for himself.

The following, dealing with the more pronounced and

(1)ll. 76-80.

(2)ll. 25-26.

obvious features of Nature's beauty seems somewhat theatrical and rhetorical,

"Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his home;
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tone
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams on the lake.⁽¹⁾

In contrast with the above is Stanza LXXXIX which enshrines the deepest appreciation of nature that Byron's works betray.

"All heaven and earth are still - though not in
sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep:-
All heaven and earth are still: From the high host
Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,
All is concentr'd in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.
This in its sense of Nature's still and secret life

(1)Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III S.VIII.

is very Wordsworthian; and if we had to give a reason for our feeling that its subtle and delicate appreciation surpasses Byron's usual admiration for the patently striking features of nature, we should have resource to Wordsworth.

"... the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants ... and one being is elevated above another in proportion as he possesses this capability."⁽¹⁾

This distinction of degree also holds as to the varying poetical moods of one and the same man. Byron wrote this stanza in a great moment, when he penetrated beyond obvious & palpably impressive features to Nature in her essential greatness, silent and unobtrusive.

In Canto IV Byron's appreciation of nature continues but he reverts to his love of her wilder aspects. And instead of a deep still poetry of great intensity and significance, as in the last quotation, we have magnificent rhetoric, such as the eulogy offered to the Sea with which the poem closes. In Byron's other works the element of nature poetry drops into abeyance and is seen no more,— another point of evidence that it was not ^{an} essential development of his nature.

We now come to what slight summing up remains to be made. It is impossible to adduce any very concrete conclusion from these passages which evince a debt to Wordsworth. They are but a "drop in the bucket" amid the many

(1) Oxford Wordsworth p.935. Column 2.

stanzas of Childe Harold, and this poem itself bears only a very small proportion to the bulk of his works. Moreover the spirit of these few stanzas is overwhelmingly contradicted - though not confuted - by the general spirit of his poetry. The influence of Wordsworth upon Byron is then only slight and casual. If it is safe to interpret a passage from one of his subjective "dramas" as selfmeant,

"This should have been a noble creature: he
 Hath all the energy which would have made
 A goodly frame of glorious elements,
 Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
 It is an awful chaos - light and darkness,
 And ^{fire} ~~mad~~ and dust and passions and pure thoughts
 Mix'd, and contending without end or order,"⁽¹⁾

if we may interpret this as self meant, then I should say that amid "the light "and numbered among "the pure thoughts" are some few ^{at best transitory,} musings, in which he was influenced by Wordsworth.

(1) Manfred. Act.III. close of sc.1.

CHAPTER VII.

Wordsworth's Influence upon Matthew Arnold.

In the introduction to Chapter III we grouped together Coleridge, Keats, Shelley and Byron as belonging to one period, the great period of English Romanticism. No sooner do we leave them for Tennyson, Arnold or Browning than we are acutely sensible of being in another world and in another atmosphere. The way in which the general course of human life and endeavour thus falls into unmistakably distinct periods is one of the most mysterious of all phenomena. (Arnold in his poem "The Future" likens this general course of life to a river, rushing from its mountain home down into the fertile plains, where it broadens out into a rich stream, to slip at last through the low coast lands into the mighty sea. The simile is as apt as any. Bending it to our present examination of literature, in the torrential energy and ebullitions of its descent from the mountains, and in its freshness amid its early home, we may see the rich fresh extraordinary energies which moved man and the race of poets in the Romantic Age of English Literature. The river broadens out, its energy and speed are dispersed in a wider channel, creeping among

all its little coves and creeks and shallows, it flows sluggishly; there are no falls and cataracts to "blow their trumpet from the steep" or to sparkle in the sunlight, only an occasional rapid. This typifies for us the general course of the Victorian Age. The energy of the race was dispersed as it had never been before, commercialism, imperialism, science, afforded it an infinite scope for labour. Man's spirit flowed into the ¹¹wide channels and spent itself among these multifarious outlets for activity. As a consequence there were no great poets. Great poets appear when the spirit and energy of society flows with a definite bent between well defined banks. When the Middle Ages passed and with them their "other-worldliness," the nation as a whole awoke to the fact that this world is not such an intolerable place ^{of} ~~after~~ sojourn after all, but one worthy to engross even our highest powers, and not merely our physical instincts. Accordingly the nation set itself to live a rich enjoyable practical life. In this common spirit of zest for living the Elizabethan Age produced its superlatively great dramas. (The literature of the Romantic Period was produced when the whole of Europe had been agitated by a common movement towards liberty, and had been moved by a common hope, that in the immediate future life might ^{be} once more restored to its natural and unfettered course. But the energy of the race in the Victorian Age was dispersed, we said; a change also

came over its nature. It became to a great extent intellectual. Just as the waters of the river in their middle course settle down into a tranquil stream, and are no longer agitated into heights and depths as in their early course, so the extraordinary movements of spirit, which in the Romantic Age produced religious revivals, marvellous poetry, natural religions and philosophies, settled down during the Victorian Age into a calm intellectual flow.

We have now to ask how during this period did the poets appreciate Wordsworth, and to what extent were they influenced by him? We shall find that one, Arnold, sick of his own age yearned back to the past time, and tried to be a quasi-disciple to him; that another Tennyson who accepted his own age and countered its multifarious activities by as multifarious a poetry, accepted him as a literary example for study and imitation; and that a third, Meredith, trying to conquer his age, accepted Wordsworthianism as the keystone of his philosophy of life.

We come now to the first of the three poets mentioned for examination, Matthew Arnold. Arnold was not blind to the nature of the age in which he was cast. He saw that it was an age of Intellectualism, when men's minds worked almost solely along the lines of Reason, and apprehended things only in their intellectual aspect. His own experience taught him that this way of knowing the world was inadequate

to satisfy the human spirit: he knew that the satisfaction of life could not come to a man by the channels of reason alone. With all other ways of comprehension ruled out by Reason, which allowed only its own, living seemed a hopeless task to him: he was thinking of himself as typical of his age when he described Empedocles as,

"Nothing but a devouring flame of thought
But a naked eternally restless mind."⁽¹⁾

Those ecstasies which Wordsworth experienced moving within the very depths of his soul, and giving him a sense of timeless, transcendent Being,

"Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
of endless agitation."⁽²⁾

Arnold knew could not be his. He was in the bondage of Intellectualism which

"... never lets us clasp and feel the All
But through "its" forms and modes and stifling veils!"⁽³⁾
How well Wordsworth had appreciated this state of mind when he described it as,

"Viewing all objects unremittingly
In disconnection dead and spiritless."⁽⁴⁾

- Act II
- (1) Empedocles on Etna, LL. 329-30.
 - (2) Excursion. Bk. IV. Ll. 1145-7.
 - (3) Act. II. Ll. 353-4. Empedocles on Etna.
 - (4) Excursion. Bk. IV. 961-2.

This is the state of the true infidel.

And the intellectualism of Arnold's age not only led men into a labyrinthine and futile quest for some solution of life, but it stifled and discounted many of the sensibilities which made for joy in life. Arnold could diagnose the evil, only too well. He himself had not always been bondsman to Intellectualism. In his poetic youth he had been free,

"We had not lost our balance then, nor grown
Thought's slaves, and dead to every natural joy!
The smallest thing could give us pleasure then!
The sports of the country people,
A flute-note from the woods,
Sunset over the sea;
Seed-time and harvest,
The reapers in the corn,
The vine dresser in the vineyard,
The village-girl at her wheel."⁽¹⁾

Now it was precisely because Wordsworth had not become "dead to every natural joy" that Arnold valued him, and extolled him as the greatest English poet after Shakespeare and Milton. In the introduction to his selection of Wordsworth's poems he says: "Wordsworth's poetry is great because

(1) Erapedocles on Etna. Act II. ll 248-267.

of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in Nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in ease after ease, he shows us the joy and renders it so as to make us share it. The source of joy from which he thus draws is the truest and most unfailing source of joy accessible to man. It is also accessible universally. Wordsworth brings us therefore, according to his own strong and characteristic line, he brings us word

"Of joy in widest commonalty spread."⁽¹⁾

When Wordsworth died Arnold had hailed him also in his poetry.

"He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke and loos'd our hearts in tears.
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth;
Smiles broke from us and we had ease.
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o'er the sunlit fields again:
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
Our youth return'd: for there was shed

(1)p.XXI. Golden Treasury Edition. Macmillan & Co.

On spirits that had long been dead,
 Spirits dried up and closely-furl'd,
 The freshness of the early world."⁽¹⁾

Arnold envied Wordsworth's "power of joy." Although in his introduction to Wordsworth's poems he pooh-poohed his philosophy and his belief in the high instincts of childhood, there can be no doubt that he longed to attain this same "power of joy" that he might make it the basis of a spiritual serenity such as Wordsworth founded upon it. The kernal² of his endeavour is found in this injunction

"Yearn to the greatness of nature!"

Rally the good in the depth of thyself!"⁽²⁾

This stamps him as a would-be disciple of Wordsworth.

He found however that he could only follow Wordsworth with a difference. The greatness of Nature to which Wordsworth had yearned, and which he had imbibed within his own soul, was "the joy in widest commonalty spread;" Arnold could not aspire to this, it contented him if he might have Her peace. This was the one thing he sought in Nature; whenever he turns to her it is for this. The first poem of his first volume of 1849 introduces the quest -

"One lesson Nature let me learn of thee

(1)Memorial Verses. Ll.45-57.

(2)Youth of Man. Ll.117-118.

Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity."⁽¹⁾
 He was under no delusion that peace is but joy under
 another name, for he speaks of

"That general Life, which does not cease,
 Where secret is not joy, but peace,"⁽²⁾
 and so distinguishes the two. In "Self Dependence" and
 "A Farewell" he tries to realise this peace through his
 favourite imagery of the sea calmly rolling beneath the
 quiet moon and stars. "The Lines written in Kensington
 Gardens" close with a prayer to the "calm soul of all
 things" to make him feel her peace. Finally as the
 uttermost hope he entertains for coming generations, he
 offers peace, which he again sees in nature and realises
 in natural images.

"Haply, the River of Time,
 As it grows, as the towns on its marge
 Fling their wavering lights
 On a wider statelier stream -
 May acquire, if not the calm
 Of its early mountainous shore,
 Yet a solemn peace of its own.

And the width of the waters, the hush

(1) Ll. 1 and 5. Oxford Arnold. p. 36.

(2) Resignation. Ll. 191-2.

Of the grey expanse where he floats,
 Freshening its current and spotted with foam
 As it draws to the ocean, may strike
 Peace to the soul of the man on its breast:
 As the pale waste widens around him -
 As the banks fade dimmer away -
 As the stars come out, and the night-wind
 Brings up the stream

Murmurs and scents of the infinite Sea."⁽¹⁾

Arnold then yearned not to the joy of Nature but to her Peace. To what extent he attained it we cannot say. Possibly as the waves broke, dimly seen in the moonlight, and the moist sea wind lifted his hair, it entered into his very soul. But we have no record of such in his poetry, As far as we have record, this yearning to the peace of nature was an endeavour which achieved no high consummation.

If we seek an explanation of this failure we must in part attribute it to his Age. The spirit of Darwin was, as it were, beginning to brood upon the land. The atmosphere was scientific. Nature began more and more to be comprehended only intellectually; the emotional susceptibilities in man to which she had formerly appealed began to be numbed. All this affected Arnold. In "Self Dependence" for instance, one wonders whether he is not seeking to grasp and appreciate

(1) The Future - closing stanza.

the peace of the starry heavens through the intellectual knowledge he had of their immutable workings. If he was so doing, then it explains why he did not attain to the peace of nature within his own soul; for the truth he thus grasped would be that "relying upon external testimony" and not the "truth carried alive into the heart by passion." As far as he was thus scientific and intellectual, even in this yearning to the greatness of nature, he was not a follower of Wordsworth whose ultimate reliance was placed upon

"sensations sweet

Felt in the blood and felt along the heart."

To descend into detail from the general statement that the general spirit of his age was scientific, and so inimical to his poetic tendencies and endeavours, we may speak of his early training and education. Under his father the precept was hammered into him, "Think, think for yourself. Ponder, cogitate, learn to know." As a man he poured out the same advice to his age; his social doctrine was Hellenism, an advocacy of clear thinking and firm adherence to the intelligible law of "Things". This weighty emphasis upon intellect was not merely hostile, it was fatal to his poetic nature. The appeal of the emotions for credence of their experience he regarded as the blandishments of "The New Sirens."

" "Come" you say "opinion trembles,
 Judgement shifts, convictions go:
 Life dries up, the heart disassembles:
 Only, what we feel, we know.
 Hath your wisdom known emotions?
 Will it weep our burning tears?
 Hath it drunk of our love-potions
 Crowning moments with the weight of years?"

I am dumb. Alas! too soon, all
 Man's grave reasons disappear:
 Yet, I think, at God's tribunal
 Some large answer you shall hear.
 But for me, my thoughts are straying
 Where at sunrise, through the vines,
 On these lawns I saw you playing,
 Hanging garlands on the odorous pines."⁽¹⁾

Whether Arnold heard "some large answer" in vindication of his endeavour we do not know. He has not recorded it in his poetry. Indeed as I understand the working of the poetic mind and appreciate his poetry, as a poet he lost by this endeavour which curbed and stifled his emotional nature, by casting so exclusive a reliance upon intellect.

(1) The New Sirens. ll. 81-96.

But Arnold's failure is not due merely to his age and educational training inclining his disposition, and his appreciation of nature to be scientific and philosophical, rather than poetical and emotional; it is also in part due to essential deficiency in his own emotional nature.

Compared with Wordsworth and indeed with many ordinary men, he could not feel. His love poems are a revelation of this. As love poetry they are ridiculous; he can never forget himself; always he is quite as much concerned with himself as with Marguerite. Of rapture or passion they contain not a trace. Put them besides Burn's poems, and these by their lyrical intensity of passion prove that Arnold's as love poems are not worth the name. Except in a vein of poignant sadness as in "Lucy" Wordsworth refrained from writing love poetry, but he said "Had I been a writer of love poetry it would have been natural for me to write with a deal of warmth which could hardly have been approved by my principles, and which might have been undesirable for the reader."⁽¹⁾ His sister Dorothy also said of him in a letter,⁽²⁾ "William has.... a sort of violence of affection if I may so term it, which demonstrates itself every moment of the day when the objects of his affection are present with him." Wordsworth could love with a passionate energy

(1) Quoted Giegerich p. 143. See also Crescent Vol. III. p. 91.

(2) To Forncett. Feb. 1792.

of feeling. This deficiency of Arnold's emotional nature, so strikingly in contrast with Wordsworth's in the matter of earthly love, extends deeper to that world of feeling which constitutes the spiritual life of a man. The contrast with Wordsworth also extends into this greater world. Love of our fellow creatures, particularly of woman is a deep elemental passion; and in its failure to stir Arnold it argues in him either a meagreness or a hardness of emotional nature; either of these would be, and evidently was, all sufficient to debar him from a spiritual and ecstatic appreciation of nature, such as was Wordsworth's by virtue of his rich emotional susceptibility.

But there were two sides to Arnold's endeavour to follow in the footsteps of Wordsworth, the first outward towards nature, the second inward, to order the soul's inner house and put its powers in array. "Rally the good in the depths of thyself" he said; or again when speaking as Empedocles,

"Once read thy own breast right,

And thou hast done with fears!

Man gets no other light,

Search he a thousand years.

Sink in thyself! there ask what ails thee,

at that shrine."⁽¹⁾

(1) Ll. 142-6. Act. I Sc. II Empedocles or Etra.

The soul, Arnold saw, must not be beset by a blizzard of wants and desires, which chase one another before its eye, and make its purpose as shifty as the flaws of the wind. For the man who is an egoist, albeit a spiritual one, who stands up and says "I have needs and I will seek them" the guiding principle of life must be to demand of his own soul, exactly what it desires. This is precisely what Wordsworth did according to the testimony of Coleridge already quoted.

"... he is a happy man because he is a philosopher, because he knows the intrinsic value of the different objects of human pursuit and regulates his wishes in strict subordination to that knowledge, because he fails and with a practical faith the truth of that which you, more than once... have pressed upon me, that we can do but one thing well, and that therefore we must make a choice, He has made that choice from his earliest youth and has pursued and is pursuing it."⁽¹⁾

It would be foolish to suppose that Wordsworth's example was the sole influence leading Arnold to make this attempt to order his own inner house. Arnold the Classicist must have heard and pondered the Socratic dictum "Know thyself." The example and the religious teaching of his father, the

(1) Antea p. 74.

great schoolmaster, likewise, must have laid before him the same principle of self-examination and decision of aim, for Thomas Arnold bent all his own powers towards "The mark for the prize of the high calling," and it was not his fault that his son did otherwise. But despite these other influences inclining in the same direction, it is probable that Wordsworth's example also affected Arnold. (He was a deep and enthusiastic student of Wordsworth, an avowed Wordsworthian,) and if he strove to follow the deer who found strength in the contemplation of Nature, it is only reasonable to suppose that his ethical endeavour of self examination benefitted by the same example. However it be, Arnold's endeavour failed. He may have passed his desires in review and have selected one to be the prize of his life's endeavours, but he did not hold to the choice. On these high ethical and moral plains his disposition proved vacillating, his purpose infirm. Unlike the Duke of Wellington whom he praises in his sonnet he never selected "one clue to life and followed it." Partly again this was a reflection into his character from the age in which he lived - it too had no definite aim and was striving for no definite shore - but none the less it was a defect of character; he himself recognised it as such in "A Summer Night." In this poem the quiet moonlight seemed to say to

him -

"Hast thou then still the old unquiet breast
That neither deadens into rest
Nor ever feels the fiery glow
That whirls the spirit from itself away,
But fluctuates to and fro
Never by passion quite possess'd

And never quite benumb'd by the world's sway?"⁽¹⁾

Arnold never conquered this inquietude of spirit, which, yearning to breathe "the airs of heavens", yet could not rid itself of the worldliness of earth. He longed to live a spiritual life such as Wordsworth or one of the old fathers had lived, but he could not bend all his thoughts and aspirations upon a spiritual life. The outer world would creep in, and in his time being rationalistic and materialistic, was an unwholesome world for a poet. It tainted him. As Mr. Watson has noted, and as Professor Quiller-Couch has noted again, in Arnold,

"Something of worlding mingled still

With bard and sage."⁽²⁾

He failed, we may say finally, to attain the aspirations he had to the spiritual serenity of Wordsworth, and for two all sufficient reasons. His Age was against him in the attempt,

(1) A Summer Night. Ll. 27-33.

(2) Oxford Arnold. p. XI.

and likewise his own disposition.

The influence that Wordsworth exerted on Arnold was for the most part moral and ethical, and futile at that. The subject matter of his poetry was only slightly influenced, and the influence is only clearly to be seen in two early and unimportant poems. In the introduction to "Cromwell" he goes out of his way to contrast the mountains and the sea, as the cradles of freedom, with the birthplace of his hero. In this connection a slight trace of Wordsworthianism is somewhat impertinently introduced. It had not been Cromwell's lot, for instance, to

"... hear, 'mid circling crags, the impatient cry
Of the pent winds, that scream in agony!
Yet all high sounds that mountain children hear
Flash'd from thy soul upon thine inward ear;
All Freedom's mystic language - storms that roar
By hill or wave, the mountain or the shore,-
All these had stirr'd thy spirit, and thine eye
In common sights read secret sympathy."⁽¹⁾

The opening lines of the above quotation make one think of Wordsworth's "Simplon Pass." More interesting, though hardly of any more significance is "The Hayswater Boat." It was published in 1849 in his first volume, and never reprinted

(1) Cromwell. ll. 25-32.

by Arnold. The poem is wholly imitative of the poetry of Wordsworth, as represented by "Resolution and Independence" and "The Thorn." These would doubtless be quoted by anyone wishing to illustrate the endeavour Wordsworth made to delineate and reveal the mystery of the common place.

Arnold's poem is a similar attempt, except that instead of an old leech-gatherer and an aged thorn, we have a decrepit boat floating on a desolate expanse of water. The poem moreover actually reminds us of these two poems of Wordsworth's. Thus in the following first stanza -

"A region desolate and wild,
Black chafing water: and afloat
And lonely as a truant child
In a waste wood, a single boat:
No mast, no sails are set thereon;
It moves, but never moveth on:
And welters like a human thing
Amid the wild waves weltering."

the line "It moves but never moveth on" reminds us how the old leech gatherer was like a cloud that "moveth altogether if it move at all." Both poets seek to impress us by the strangeness of undefined, almost unapparent motion. The last two lines are of course execrable. In the third stanza the

"weird domes of moulded green

That spot, the solitary scene"

remind us of the mossy mound that in "The Thorn" was supposed to be the murdered infant's grave. The verses are also octosyllabic as in "The Thorn". ^{except for the latter's two six syllabled lines} The tone and intention ^{in each stanza} of the poem as a whole, in fact, is the same as these two of Wordsworth's, which must unquestionably have served as models. But considering the complete body of Arnold's poetical works in comparison with the very minor importance of those which betray the influence of Wordsworth, Arnold's debt as to subject matter is very insignificant. His attempt to follow the older poet, his yearning to the greatness of Nature only introduced Nature into his poetry slightly and with ethical and moral purpose - there is very little disinterested love of Nature for her own sake. The purpose was abortive, and in the details of his endeavour to commune with Nature, he did not imitate Wordsworth.

There are then, only a few isolated instances, such as already quoted, to indicate a slight and casual influence exercised by Wordsworth upon the subject matter of Arnold's poetry. The conclusion that we reach when examining whether Wordsworth influenced Arnold in matters of style, is also unsatisfactory in its indefiniteness. Here we are hampered by the well known fact of Arnold's great devotion to the Classics. He was a classical scholar of repute, and his ideals of style and diction were classical, and

indeed the same as Wordsworth's. But Classical Art is classical art in all cases. He must have drawn the great part of his literary instruction from the classics, and whatever Wordsworth added, it is merged in this greater bulk, and so is indistinguishable. The nearest approach I think to a general statement, that we may make, is that Wordsworth, by his best poetry, offered Arnold an example of pure classical art perfectly employed in English verse. That Arnold appreciated it, there can be no doubt, his criticism of Wordsworth's style in the introduction to his "Selection of Wordsworth's poems" is the last word on the subject.

CHAPTER VII.

Wordsworth's influence upon Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

In the preceding chapter we spoke of the Victorian Age as characterised by a tremendous dispersal of human energy along lines of materialistic and rationalistic endeavour. Arnold if we may judge by his yearnings and disquietudes was essentially of a religious temperament, and so felt himself cast in an alien time. The age oppressed him with its sick hurry and divided aims; he saw England as

"The weary Titan, with deaf
Ears and labour-dimm'd eyes"

deprived of all vision of eternal principles which unify the universe for us, and give it a meaning. For him things lowered in "disconnection dead and spiritless." But this was due to his exclusively religious temperament; the bulk of his poetry is but a prolonged and dispersed echo of the religious cry of all the ages "O that I knew where I might find Him." His failure to attain a standpoint of religious serenity tinged his poetry, at any rate, with gloom. Other people of different temperament found or made life quite livable

in this same Victorian Age. Such an one was Tennyson; he largely accepted his age and made no great fight against it. He could not solve the riddle of the world, but he did not let this colour even his poetry, let alone his life, with any considerable pessimism. The multifarious activity of his age he countered by a multifarious poetry. His efforts yielded him first the woman he loved and a beautiful home, then a prosperous life, the Laureateship, and finally a peerage of the United Kingdom. In his individual personality, in his rich enjoyment of life and practical attitude to the world of things, he was the modern Englishman in ideal.

It is impossible to praise Tennyson so highly as a poet. His work is too multifarious. Hitherto the great poets we have had, have educated us to the belief, that concentration of energy within some particular field is necessary for the attainment of high poetic greatness. Chaucer with a sympathetic yet twinkling eye observed human nature, and in the success with which he did this, resides his greatness. Spenser was engrossed with framing the ideal man perfect in all the moral virtues; Shakespeare studied and represented men and women as they lived, strove, and died: Milton was inspired to justify the ways of God to man. Objects of natural beauty, and Man as Nature had framed him with his deep elemental passions, occupied the

powers of Wordsworth. With how great a concentration of energy this poet worked we have seen. To be like Shakespeare was the unattained ideal that moved Keats; but in what he actually achieved there was a unity. His great work delineates such things, as by their richness of beauty, had carried into his heart so deep a joy, and impressed him with so great a significance, that their message seemed to him to be one of Truth. In alternating joy and sorrow, the poet Shelley sang of love, either as between individual souls, or as the principle of heaven and earth and sea. But when the question is asked "What is the peculiar domain of Tennyson?" or "What is his peculiar line of poetic endeavour?" we must preface be silent. There is no real unity in Tennyson's work. Like his age he had no real purpose.

The multifarious nature of his work is astonishing. Political principles claimed him in the two Locksley Halls; he wrote some fine patriotic songs; striking events of national interest as the death of the Duke of Wellington or the old incident of The Revenge evoked magnificent poems from him. In "The Princess" he considers in half serious fashion the question of woman's equality with man, upon which contemporary interest began to focus. The poem of "Lady Clara Vere de Vere" is a stroke in the cause of democracy. The ultimate problems of life which perplexed

the social mind in his day as now, were also considered by him, in "In Memoriam." He also took up various themes of poetry, which had become well established, or which were popular at the time; one of his English Idylls continues the poetry of rustic life which Southey and Wordsworth had established; poems of such rich dreamy beauty as "Senone," "The Lotus Eaters," owe a debt to Keats who revived once more to a richer life the poetry of the Elizabethan Classical Renaissance; "The May Queen" and "Enoch Arden" are ventures in the poetry of sentiment popular in the first half of the nineteenth century. The latter is indeed founded upon "Homeward Bound" by Miss Proctor. To be a guide and inspiration to his own times, he revived the old legends of the British Arthur, and made the fabric of the antique story carry the somewhat colourless and effete sentiments of the time. In his composition Tennyson had also something of the dramatist. His gifts were not great, hardly more than in general proportion to the time when the drama so languished. His character studies "Ulysses," "Tithonus," "Lucretius," perhaps are the first indications of this bent of his genius. Certainly they are among the finest things he wrote. The admirable poems in dialect are the next stage of development, which is followed by the final one, when he essayed the full-blown dramas of "Queen Mary," "Harold," "Becket." His style, diction, phraseology,

all that goes to make the verbal garb of poetry, are compounded of as many simples as the subject matter of his poetry. He had a high genius for beautiful poetic expression, but his felicity was largely the result of continually and deliberately imbuing his mind with the best poetry in past and present, foreign and native literature. Tennyson was not so much a great poet as a great literary artist. He stands in the same relation to the giants of English Literature, as a superlatively clever artist does to the great painters. The superlatively clever artist has studied everything, can essay almost any subject and render it with a marvellous felicity of detail, colour, and form; each of the great painters works only in one comparatively narrow domain, and paints maybe children, the faces of saints, sunsets, mountains, or the quiet beauties of nature. Possibly, indeed probably, this great work will not be so strikingly attractive as that of the clever artist, but each of these great painters gets into his work that which the clever artist seldom or never catches - soul. It is the same with Tennyson. Compare his work with that of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and it lacks soul. "A man's reach," says Browning's Andrea del Sarto "should exceed his grasp." Tennyson's does not. His passion, emotions, and imagination are not so great as his powers of artistic and felicitous expression.

When we come now to ask what influence Wordsworth had upon Tennyson, the examination just made will give us the general answer without further search. Tennyson sought to imbue his mind with all the best poetry of literature. Among the many poets he studied, and whose poetic beauties he strove to assimilate, was Wordsworth, one of the masters of "pure art", and a natural mystic. The influence Wordsworth had upon him was then only casual and incidental. Of this there are quite numerous examples. The late J. Churton Collins for instance, in that painstaking attempt of his to prove that as a literary artist Tennyson laboured very much after the manner of a mosaic worker, viz., his "Illustrations of Tennyson" had noted many passages that Tennyson has thus taken from Wordsworth -

"Our weakness somehow shakes the shadow, Time."

This expression is from Wordsworth

"Death, the skeleton

And Time, the Shadow." (1)

"He has a solid base of temperament,

But as the water lily starts and slides

Upon the level in little puffs of wind

Tho' anchored to the bottom, such is he."

This felicitous and picturesque simile is one of Tennyson's

(1) Yew Trees.

many debts to Wordsworth.

"A thing

Subject.... to vital accidents;
And like the water lily, lives and thrives
Whose root is fixed in stable earth, whose head
Floats on the tossing waves."(1)

These are noted by Churton Collins on page 82 and page 84 of his book, when shewing Tennyson's general indebtedness to other poets in his "Princess!" The second stanza of the nineteenth poem of "In Memoriam" is also undoubtedly reminiscent of a stanza in Wordsworth's "Blind Highland Boy."

"There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills."

With this compare

"For to this lake, by night and day,
The great sea-water finds its way
Through long, long windings of the hills,
And drinks up all the pretty rills
And rivers large and strong."(2)

Reference has already been made to one of his English Eclogues, "Dora," as continuing the poetry of rustic life.

(1) Excursion V. ad medium.

(2) B. H. Boy. Ll. 56-60.

initiated by Southey^E and established by Wordsworth.

Wordsworth himself recognised Tennyson as an excelling disciple, and once said to him -

"Mr Tennyson, I have been endeavouring all my life to write a pastoral like your "Dora" and have not succeeded."

The poem is indeed written throughout in the plain, unadorned style and diction that Wordsworth used. Why the Lake poet should thus admire it however, is difficult to say, as it is tame and prosaic; but even among his own poetry Wordsworth's taste went astray. For the story itself Tennyson received no hint from Wordsworth, as Churton Collins points out it is undeniably taken from one of Miss Mitford's anecdotes in "Our Village." Debts of philosophical thought to Wordsworth are not to be found in Tennyson; the close of "The Two Voices" is as near an approach to one as any, where after a bout with philosophical despair, the poet walks in the fields and is refreshed by Nature. In this passage there is however no reminiscence of either word or phrase from Wordsworth. Other minor reminiscences may be traced slightly, attesting the general conclusion announced beforehand, and now demonstrated that Wordsworth's influence upon Tennyson was only incidental. Tennyson studied all the poets, among them Wordsworth. Except in "Dora," Wordsworth had no apparent influence upon his literary methods, which are very different from his own. Nor did Wordsworth make him a mystic, nor a poet of Nature;

Nature appears incidentally in Tennyson, and often in the guise of the "pathetic fallacy." The influence of Wordsworth then, resides in the poem "Dora", and in the incidental borrowings which Tennyson obtained from Wordsworth, and moulded into the fabric of his own work, after the method of a mosaic worker.

CHAPTER IX.

Wordsworth's Influence upon George Meredith.

In the course of this thesis we have seen that a general consideration of a poet and his work, is in some cases very useful to set bounds to one's literary search, or to afford some indication of the results that are likely to accrue from such a search. Thus, remembering that the work of the highest lyrical genius is not often reminiscent of that of its predecessors, we were not surprised that in Shelley's poetry comparatively few echoes of Wordsworth are to be found. Again, our examination of Tennyson's poetic method taught us exactly what to expect from our investigation of the influence Wordsworth had upon him. Coming now to Meredith an examination of his poetry and its characteristics will very greatly clear the way for an estimation of the debt he owes to Wordsworth.

In the first place Meredith's work is so distinctive; none who have read him at all attentively can have failed to remark two traits at least, his originality, and his spasmodic and obstructed art. Insistence upon Meredith's originality

must of course not be taken as implying that the full body of his thought stands four-square, without the least reliance upon the thought of any other man. Such a thing is preposterously impossible. But by this insistence we mean this; that it was not Meredith's practice to borrow from other men; he assimilated main principles of thought. There are in fact no such wholesale appropriations from the works of others as Tennyson indulged in: Meredith, to quote an instance, would never have appropriated Wordsworth's simile of the waterlily, as Tennyson did. We shall not expect then in Meredith's works many incidental reminiscences from the thought of Wordsworth.

The consideration of Meredith's art is one full of regrets for the true lover of poetry. If ever a man had a poetic soul Meredith had; his thoughts were noble, profound and poetic; his love of Nature that of a devotee; for his fellow creatures he had a love and sympathy that were surpassing, and an insight into their human nature equally wonderful. And yet Meredith is not a great poet, only a minor one. The reason for this is the imperfection of his art. Usually its utterance is laboured and obstructed. In high poetic utterance it is fitful and unreliable; and when it does break forth in the speech of true poetry, its untrammelled spontaneity is usually but one other indication, that over his art the poet wielded but an ill-established

control. That splendid poem "Ode to the Spirit of Earth in Autumn", the symphony of the South West Wind, seems essentially an outburst, a composition produced at white heat.

"Away, for the cymbals clash aloft
 In the circles of pine, on the moss-floor soft.
 The nymphs of the woodland are gathering there.
 They huddle the leaves and trample and toss;
 They swing in the branches, they roll in the moss,
 They blow the seed on the air.
 Back to back they stand and blow
 The winged seed on the cradling air,
 A fountain of leaves over bosom and back.
 The pipe of the faun comes on their track,
 And the weltering alleys overflow
 With musical shrieks and wind-wedded hair,
 The riotous company melt to a pair.
 Bless them mother of kindness!"⁽¹⁾

Oftenest Meredith's fine poetical utterances are quite brief - a line or a few lines - and come as oases in a desert, or as beauty spots amid uniform mediocrity. Like Donne, Vaughan, and Browning, he is a poet of fits and flashes. There are in fact very few poems that show throughout their length any high degree of poetic "staying-

(1) Meredith's Poems pp. 175-6.

power." - "Antigone," "Modern Love," "Spirit of Earth in Autumn," "Lucifer in Starlight," "Phœbus with Admetus," "Love in the Valley." Even in these poems the light of inspiration does not maintain a uniform intensity. It varies not only between poem and poem, but between stanza and stanza, line and line. It is unsteady, it coruscates, flickers and gleams. This art at its best I call, spasmodic, and in its general nature, obstructed. From its essential nature, I do not see how it could ever extensively assimilated into its alternately labouring, and then flashingly spontaneous lines, reminiscences of cadence and phrase from the great literary masters. It is a facile and studied art like Tennyson's that can with happy effect incorporate into its own bulk fragments from other writers. In addition of course Meredith's temperament in its virile originality eschewed imitation and plagiarism.

It is then not only improbable that we shall find incidental reminiscences of thought from Wordsworth in Meredith - as we have already said - but also improbable that we shall find reminiscences of cadence or phrase. Accordingly our general comparison of Meredith with Wordsworth affords us this surmise, that Wordsworth has exercised practically no detailed influence upon Meredith.

An examination of Meredith's poems bears out this conjecture. The places where any connection with the older poet is betrayed are very few; and often the connection may easily be mere coincidence or only fancifulness on the part of the critic. Thus Meredith's poem "The Sleeping City" inevitably reminds one of the sight Wordsworth saw from Westminster Bridge.

"The clattering chariot rolls not by,
The windows shew no waking eye,
The houses smoke not, and the air

Is clear, and all the midnight fair.

The centre of the striving world,
Round which the human fate is curled,
To which the future crieth wild, -
Is pillowed like a cradled child."⁽¹⁾

All the connection however that may be noted with Wordsworth's poem is that Meredith, like the older poet, speaks of the clear, smokeless, air, and of the quietude that broods over the city, making it appear to sleep. The similarity may be coincidence or it may not. Again we may note that both poets single out the harebell for simple and exquisite description,⁽²⁾ and make the violet⁽³⁾ the type of the shy retiring maidens they both admired most. In the second number of the pastorals there may also be a slight reminiscence of phrase from Wordsworth. To the poet a slope of ploughed land, bare after the autumn harvest, is

"---- A mystery;

An influence strange and swift as dreams;
A whispering of old romance;
A temple naked to the clouds;
One of Nature's bosoms fresh revealed
Heaving with adoration!"⁽⁴⁾

(1)p.12.

(2)Prelude X. 11.276-9 and Flower of Ruins. p.20.

(3)Lucy. and Song of Spring. p.55.

(4)p.49.

In one of the most beautiful of Wordsworth's sonnets we read

"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun,
Breathless with adoration;"⁽¹⁾

The similarity is interesting for if it may establish a connection, then it offers a suggestion that Meredith here in this poem of his juvenilia a natural mystic, was under the influence of Wordsworth the greatest of the mystics of Nature. This same suggestion is also afforded by the poem to "The Southwest Wind in the Woodlands."

"The voice of Nature is abroad
This night; she fills the air with balm;
Her mystery is o'er the land;
And who that hears her now and yields
His being to her yearning tones,
And seats his soul upon her wings,
And broadens o'er the wind swept world
With her, will gather in the flight
More knowledge of her secrets; more
Delight in her beneficence,
Than hours of musing or the lore
That lives with men could ever give."

These twelve lines towards the end of the poem are reminiscent of Wordsworth's teaching in "The Tables turned."

(1) Oxford Wordsworth. p.258. Serret xxx.
(2) pp.25-26.

The comparison between the contents of the poems cannot with any precision be extended to their metres; although it may be noted that half of "The Tables Turned" also consists of octosyllabic lines, but distributed evenly among the quatrain stanzas. A metre the two poets however have perfectly in common, is the quatrain having lines alternately of eight and six syllables. Wordsworth uses it for example in "Lucy" and Meredith in a poem of the same stamp, having for its subject, a lovely, yet humble peasant child such as Wordsworth loved. The following stanza begins exactly as "Lucy" does:

"She dwelt where 'twixt low-beaten thorns
Two mill-blades like a snail,
Enormous, with enquiring horns
Looked down on half the vale." (1)

This method of enlivening the commonplace by an imaginative simile is also Wordsworthian, although this example falls short of Wordsworth in poetic beauty. To these instances, there may be added the fact that in a mediocre poem to celebrate the tercentenary of Milton's birth, he re-echoes Wordsworth's cry concerning this same man, "England hath need of thee." This was done with perfect deliberation however, as the line following shews.

"We need him now
This latest age in repetition ories." (2)

This small collection of similarities between the poetry of Meredith and that of Wordsworth cannot, however, I think, be

(1) "The year's had worn their season's belt." p. 566.
(2) p. 467.

made the basis for much generalisation, or for any weighty conclusion. They supplement the evidence of Meredith's short poem, in appreciation of Wordsworth, to shew that he was thoroughly acquainted with the works of his great predecessor. Chiefly on the evidence of "The South West Wind in the Woodlands" we also estimate that he appreciated Wordsworth's mystical teaching concerning nature. Nothing more can be deducted with safety. But this last shred of evidence, or this last suggestion to be more cautious, is very interesting. Very slightly negating our dismissal of Wordsworth's influence as not affecting Meredith in details of thought, it points us to the sole remaining quarter where we may seek to trace this influence. If Meredith had virtually no influence upon the details of Meredith's thought and poetic technique, did he have an influence, hidden and fundamental upon his thought? Here we must look. First however we have to ask what was Meredith's thought, before we seek to disentangle a Wordsworthian element from its depths. ¶ To return now to the distinctions we made between Arnold, Tennyson and Meredith when beginning the examination of these poets, Meredith we said, unlike Arnold, did not yearn back to past times in antipathy with his own. He accepted the Victorian Age in which he was born, with all its science and intellectualism,

and unlike Tennyson, he was ^{most} zealously bent to wrestle with his age and shape some philosophy which should throw a revealing light upon it. But first of all he accepted his Age, he looked upon all that man had wrought in his spiritual darkness, upon the vast accumulation of scientific knowledge, which in fact had helped to blot out the old spiritual lights formerly lending significance to man's world, and he accepted it all unreservedly. Science had waived aside the old theology and creeds, had destroyed the belief in an anthropomorphic God and the hope of a personal immortality, had indeed as the sum of all its labours hurled man from his self given status as the heaven-descended heir of all the ages, and had instructed him that his birth was an apparent accident, his story a brief episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets. Meredith bowed to science in all this. She stripped man, but what did it matter if he were stout enough, brave enough, to stand it. The state of affairs which she revealed as the truth, is only dire if man is weak. "Courage" cried Meredith, "Enter these enchanted woods of life ye who dare." What horror there is, is only such because our weakness of spirit allows that it is horror. Once man has courage to face life and examine it, all the marvellousness of it unfolds. Earth is his mother. All the long bitter trials of evolution, the never ending fight for existence, have

been the only possible path for his advance to a greater knowledge of her, to a wider life and a greater strength within himself. Man has trodden a bloodier and harder track than the simple race of crustacea has known, but he has gained powers that they have not, and a richer fuller life. Even on the mere physical plane his life is richer. But man's development has not merely stayed there. The long and bitter struggles, the hard travailings of evolution have passed on to the intellectual plane, and man preforce in the old and never ending struggle for existence

"Has half transferred the battle to his brain
From bloody ground."(1)

This battle again gives man a wider knowledge of earth, his mother, and a greater strength within himself. Meredith also sees the extension of the process of evolution on to a third plane, the spiritual. Man finds within himself yearnings which the fruits reaped by his physical and intellectual powers are alike unable to satisfy. Within him there craves a spirit. The development of spirituality is the third and latest stage of man's evolution, considers Meredith

"Each of each in sequent birth
Blood and brain and spirit."(2)

And whither shall man's spirit turn to seek communion with

(1)Earth and Man. St.XVI.

(2)The Woods of Westermains. p.201.

its own kind, and obtain the satisfaction of its wants and yearnings? To Earth, says Meredith. Earth is the mother of man's spirit, no less than of his blood and brain; and as he turns to her for the satisfaction of his physical and intellectual cravings, so must he for the satisfaction of his spiritual desires. No physical or intellectual fruits will satisfy these last, he must obtain of nature a living comfort; he must know her as a living spirituality, just as he knows her to be an intellectual and physical actuality. Unless he can do this, all his other labours count for naught, the world is without significance, seen only in "disconnection dead and spiritless."

"Till we conceive her living we go distraught,
At best but circle wind-sails of a mill.
Seeing she lives, and of her Joy of life
Creatively has given us blood and breath
For endless war and never wound unhealed,
The gloomy wherefore of our battle field
Solves in the Spirit, wrought of her through strife
To read her own and trust her down to death."⁽¹⁾

The kernel of Meredith's philosophy and teaching is then this great fact, which he grasped both scientifically and mystically, that Earth is the mother of men, not only of their bodies, but of their mind and spirit as well.

(1) Sense and Spirit. Ll. 7-14.

Coming now to disentangle the Wordsworthian element in this philosophy, we have not far to seek. We have only to put the two poets side by side to see that there is only one possible meeting ground; Meredith is a scientific mystic of Nature, Wordsworth an orthodox Anglican mystically read in nature. Their common basis lay in their mysticism of ~~nati~~ nature. This is plainly evident if we lay their works also side by side - Meredith's unquestionably being by far the lesser in bulk and value. Thus the experience which Wordsworth had of a "dim and undetermined sense of unknown ^{modes} ~~moods~~ of being" his cognizance of "the ghostly language of the ancient earth" belong to the same genus of strange deep-stirring emotions, as the experience that brought consolation to the lonely wife in "Earth and a Wedded Woman"

"Through night, with bedroom window wide for air,
Lay Susan tranced to hear all heaven descend;
And gurgling voices came of earth, and rare,
Past flowerful, breathings, deeper than life's end,
From her heaved breast of sacred common mould;
Whereby this lone-laid wife was moved to feel
Unworded things and old
To her pained heart appeal."

The uses to which they bent their mystical experience differed. Wordsworth merged his into his religious creed, he

interpreted it as direct evidence that there was a living God. That earth was spiritual in one way no wonder to him. How else could it be, when God was a spirit? Do not the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shew forth his handiwork? The result of course was somewhat anomalous. The inspiration which he drew from earth employed as a verification of his religious creed, only fortified him in placing his beliefs in heaven, and giving the soul its home elsewhere than on earth.

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home."⁽¹⁾

Meredith made his mystical experience of nature the keystone of his scientific philosophy, a philosophy so different from Wordsworth's in its doubt of an antropomorphic God and of a personal immortality. His experience of nature he found capable of reasonable interpretation, he regarded it as the insight reaped by "reason herself tiptoe at the ultimate bound of her wit"⁽²⁾ and finally it came to be

(1) *Intimations*. StV. 11. 53-61.
(2) *Faith and Intellect* p. 359.

for him, what Wordsworth claimed the inspiration of all poetry should be, the light emanating from the great principles of our world, "the impassioned expression upon the count^{en}ance of science."

But what after all shall we say is the debt of Meredith to Wordsworth? Debt it can hardly be called. It is better to say that Meredith trod the same path that Wordsworth had trodden before him, and knew while treading it that the older poet had thus preceded him. Since the traces of the influence of Wordsworth, though slight, are to be found principally in Meredith's juvenilia, it is permissible to wonder whether it was not the example of Wordsworth that in some measure - how great or small we cannot say - first led Meredith to seek inspiration in Nature. But Meredith is neither plagiarist nor imitator. Granted the utmost we could hope to prove, that Wordsworth did indeed assist him to seek inspiration in nature, the experiences that he reaped are absolutely his own, and likewise his poetry. Wordsworth was Meredith's literary forerunner, the pioneer of the path they both trod. Speculation upon the exact import of this is too tentative. The question of course naturally arises as to how the later mystic would have fared had there been no pioneer, just as a similar query may be put in regard to his scientific philosophy, had

there been no Darwin, Wallace and Huxley. Absolute doubt of Meredith's possible achievements is easy. But who knows? The resolution of this hypothetical problem would have taken place in a world vastly different from the one that has ensued and which alone we know.

There is very little more that may be said with either safety or profit. In one other way Meredith is indebted to Wordsworth. Wordsworth broke ground for his ideas, and to a great extent prepared the taste by which he has been appreciated. Had Wordsworth never lived and supposing that Meredith had of himself evolved a natural religion, seeing how slightly popular he has proved, and how inferior his art to Wordsworth's, it is improbable that he would have obtained much hearing. Certainly his fame would have depended more upon his novels, even than it does today.

CHAPTER IX.

Conclusion.

When we come to attempt the summing up of Wordsworth's influence upon the poets and poetry that succeeded him, one point immediately stands out in unmistakeable boldness, his influence has been predominantly moral. The poets who have ^{been} influenced by him, are chiefly indebted to him for guidance in the conduct of their own lives, and in the formulation of their ideals. It cannot be argued that this is not an influence upon literature. As we have seen in the past chapters, the life of a poet determines his poetry. It is almost a platitude nowadays to point this out, all recognise that thoughts and ideals make the man; they do not belong to us, they constitute us. Upon the seven poets whom we have studied in connection with Wordsworth - with the exception of Tennyson - Wordsworth exerted an influence the same in kind though differing in mode and degree. Always this influence is moral. To Coleridge he opened out a whole world of mystical experience, which confirmed him in his interpretation of Nature as essentially spiritual. By the example and contagion of his own religious power of believing in, and clinging to ideals, by the example of that faith which,

despite all worldly batterings, holds to its beliefs through the passing years, looking even beyond death, he strengthened him, and for a time enabled him to make his ideals a light unto his path. Wordsworth's spirit, we may almost say, for a time dwelt within Coleridge. It was during this period that his greatest work was done.

Upon Keats Wordsworth exercised no such mesmeric influence. Keats accepted no infusion of Wordsworth's spirit, indeed the ideals that he made his own were diametrically opposite to Wordsworth's, but by Wordsworth's example he was led thoughtfully and deliberately to mark out a goal for his life's endeavours, and to strive towards it.

In the case of Shelley, Wordsworth's influence was not so vital. His social and altruistic ideals, the desire that so nobly possessed him to sound "the trumpet of a prophecy" that humanity might be consoled and inspired by the hope of better things, were not moulded or at all determined in their nature by Wordsworth. Like all men however Shelley was unable perfectly to live up to his ideals, he continually lapsed from them into abysses of egoistical yearnings and despair. To borrow a thought from Arnold he could not always live with the world's life because often he could not renounce his own. From these lapses into egoistical groupings he was rescued by Wordsworth,

Whom Keats considered the poet of "egoistical sublimity. He led Shelley to order his desires, and abate their wish for the immediate and transient satisfaction offered by the world. In his consequent calmness and strength of mind, Shelley, except in the last case where death overtook him, was able to grasp once more the altruistic ideals that were properly his own.

For Byron, Wordsworth was able to do very little. His influence was again moral but very transitory and futile. However, through Wordsworth, Byron upon the evidence of his poetry, was momentarily enabled to gaze into the mystical depths of the Nature, whose moral laws he so consistently flouted.

Coleridge, Keats, Shelley and Byron belong to the Age of Romanticism, and so in this age we may say that Wordsworth's influence was predominantly moral. His influence continued in the Victorian Period, and again it was predominantly moral. Arnold, like the earlier poet an egoist, was led in disgust with his own materialistic age, to seek strength and consolation for the ills of life by contemplating nature. He strove to follow Wordsworth in an age when men were thronging thick and fast along other roads and to other goals. He was not strong enough to force his way.

Upon Tennyson Wordsworth had no great moral

influence, at any rate, none that may be traced. One passage perhaps is a reproduction of one of his thoughts. The contemporary of Arnold and Tennyson however, Meredith, owes perhaps the greatest debt of any poet to Wordsworth. Unlike Arnold he did not strive against his own scientific and rationalistic age, he accepted it, and on the shoulders of its scientific labours mounted to the greatest height ~~of~~ he could for the contemplating of the world; then from this standpoint, he broke through into the spiritual world after the manner of Wordsworth.

But when studying Wordsworth in the second chapter of this thesis, we examined him in the three aspects of his poetic world, his outlook upon this world, and his Art. Of these it is the second that has exerted the great moral influence we have attributed to him. Of the other two, even in the detailed study of poets influenced by Wordsworth, we have made very little mention. Two great questions naturally arise concerning them; "Has their influence been practically nil?" or "Is their influence untraceable, and too submerged in its workings to be capable of estimation?"

Of Wordsworth's influence upon succeeding poets' choice of subject matter very little evidence has been obtained. The moral influence he exerted upon Coleridge, Arnold, Meredith, helped to draw them into a close sympathy

with nature, and nature thus came to occupy a considerable place in their poetry, especially in that of Meredith. But he made none of them poets of nature after the manner of himself, except Coleridge, and that only partially, for Coleridge was to a very great extent original. Moreover Coleridge did not continue a poet of nature for long. However it would be preposterous to expect Wordsworth to have exerted so tremendous an influence, that he should make all succeeding poets, poets of nature. It would have been a deplorable thing had he done so. But in the work of many poets who are not poets of nature, as for example Shelley and Tennyson, nature has a considerable place if only incidentally. Concerning this, the question follows as to whether Wordsworth, as the poet of nature par excellence, might not have determined the flow of succeeding poetry so that nature should appear so extensively in it. The question cannot be answered. Wordsworth is the greatest poet of nature, but before he wrote there was a poetry of nature; it would have continued had he never lived, and nature would have crept into the poetry that arose after the close of his age. The influence which has given so great a place to nature in our poetry is not Wordsworth's work merely, but the general movement of the Romantic Return to Nature. In this movement Wordsworth was but one poet, although the greatest. We must think of Wordsworth

in this respect not as gathering within himself a stream of tendency, but as a spring arising in the course of such a tendency, and continuing with it. This being so, we may not turn to such a poet, as Shelley or Tennyson, as coming after Wordsworth, and attribute to the latter that element of nature-poetry which appears in the work of either. It was due to the Romantic Return to Nature. At the same time in acknowledging a debt to the movement we also acknowledge a debt to Wordsworth's influence - though one that cannot be weighed or estimated except in the most general terms, - since he was the master spirit of the movement. In this respect then Wordsworth's influence upon the subject matter of succeeding poetry cannot be traced or estimated.

The same conclusion is the only one possible when we examine his influence as the poet of human passion and emotion. Literature succeeding Wordsworth's period deeply studied these and reproduced them in poetry. But we cannot say how much Wordsworth determined these works. The whole Romantic movement was a return to the fresh unsophisticated facts of life, and in addition to producing its own glorious literature, it has beyond question helped to determine succeeding literature in its study of human ideals, aspirations, hopes and fears. In all this Wordsworth has had his share as a great romantic poet, but to estimate what he himself has effected is impossible.

Of this general influence we can only say, that had there been no Wordsworth in the Romantic Movement, its poetry would have been a poorer thing, its influence upon succeeding literature would have been slighter, and so this literature itself would have been¹ different and probably a poorer thing.

Turning now to Wordsworth's art, we ask again the same alternative questions, "Has its influence been practically nil?" or "Is it untraceable?" Again from our examination and study we have nothing definite to shew, except an incidental influence upon Shelley and Tennyson, and again we must issue the warning not to expect too great an influence to emanate from Wordsworth. He was a great worker in "pure art", but it cannot be expected that he should have converted all succeeding artists to work in the same mode of art as himself. His bald, colourless, intensive art, relying for effect upon "the weight and dignity of that which with entire fidelity it utters" is after all only one school of poetic art among many others. Succeeding poets have preferred to follow different methods. Coleridge, Shelley, Tennyson, use an art which relies for much of its effect upon the musical qualities of its verse. Keats preferred on the whole a richly coloured art "Poetry" he said, "should surprise by a fine excess." The mediocre art of Byron also in its rhetoricalness, its glitter, its

popular musicalness, is also far removed from Wordsworth's. Byron aside, that these great poets could have imitated Wordsworth's art is certain in every case; Shelley and Tennyson actually did so, and Keats wrote "La Belle Dame sans Merci" in the same intensive naked style, while Coleridge actually anticipated Wordsworth in his art. But the great poets are essentially those who eschew imitation; they prefer to be original, and have great powers at hand to enable them to be so. Keats left "Hyperion" unfinished just because it was too Miltonic. For minor poets who are prone to imitation, Wordsworth's classical art working with the greatest economy of expression, in austere restraint and seeking perfect lucidity, is of all arts the most difficult to imitate. The effort of forging a high expression after this manner is so arduous, that nothing but powerful emotion - which only great poets possess extensively - ever succeeds. Weak emotion always dies before it attains to the speech of classical art.

But even though a poet greatly improves his artistic powers by a study of Wordsworth's art, unless he betrays himself by reminiscence there is nothing to indicate his debt to Wordsworth. The Wordsworthian classical art in its essential features and in the influence it is capable of exerting, is in no way distinguishable from the classical art of the Ancients. Arnold's

ideal of art was classical, but whether and to what extent Wordsworth participates with the Ancients in moulding his artistic ideals cannot, as already stated, be estimated. On its positive side we may then say that the influence of Wordsworth's art cannot be traced or estimated.

It also has a negative side. It represents the practice of the theory expounded in his famous Preface, and both theory and practice waged war against the conventionalities of Augustan Art. Had these not been swept away, there could have been no great Romantic literature. In this again it was working to a great end ~~and~~ in harmony with a larger movement, the general revulsion from the Augustan lifelessness and artificiality of expression. And again its influence cannot be estimated through being thus merged in the Romantic Movement. Wordsworth's poetry has also been the reading and study of all the great poets who succeeded him. How far he exerted a salutary though negative influence in pruning over rich tastes, and diffuse styles it is once more impossible to say.

It is thus impossible to decide whether Wordsworth's art has had a great or slight influence. This difficulty occurs whenever the influence of great Art is under estimate. The influence of Shakespeare's art at its best, for instance, is quite inestimable. The art which has had a striking and all-apparent influence has always been a poor art, as

that employed by Lyly or Donne. And it will always be found to have exerted its influence through some peculiar and striking feature of its composition, such as antithesis or conceits. Great art as Bagehot has so admirably pointed out, like a beautiful face has no individual features which impress us. The impression we gather from it is of a beauty one and perfect. We no more dissect it than we mentally divide up a Greek statue to enjoy it. Wordsworth's art is great art of this kind; there are no peculiar tricks and methods in it that may be seized upon for imitative use. The reading of such poems as "The Simplicon Pass" or "Michael" leaves us with a sense of an individual beauty, with no features of art protruding or overtopping the general effect. Wordsworth's art is so great, that at its best it does not seem to be art at all; no immediate insight is afforded as to how the effect is wrought.

Nor as a metrist has Wordsworth exerted a great influence, as for instance did Wyatt and Surrey, Milton, or Spenser; he introduced no fresh metres. His revival of the sonnet form, which had sunk into disuse since Milton, had however a great effect. He handled it magnificently, and other poets took it up. Thanks to Keats, Rossetti, Mrs. Browning, Tennyson - Turner, and others, the 19th century may shew many splendid sonnets, which added to those of

Wordsworth, enable it to claim premier place for sonnet writing among the ages of English Literature.

But after all theorising as to the untraceable nature of the influence he exerted upon subsequent choice of poetic subject matter, and upon subsequent artistic method, the sole really solid fact that emerges from the study of Wordsworth's influence is that it has been predominantly moral. This is not anomalous and perhaps should not be unexpected. The central energy animating both his life and his poetry was moral, and so likewise the influence he has exerted. "A good book," says Milton, "Is the precious life blood of a master spirit treasured up on purpose to a life beyond." This is certainly true of the works of Wordsworth; there is a continuity between the spirit of his own life and of his after influence. Long after his death, the spirit of the Happy Warrior hung above the ranks of the living poets, for a help and an inspiration. It is there still.

NOTE on page 75.

As an interesting example of how Wordsworth assimilated phrases from Coleridge's and so made his own work reminiscent of his friend's work, it may be noted that Dejection being written April 4th, 1802, was sent on to Wordsworth. The Oxford editors date Wordsworth's "Intimations" 1803 (?1802)-1806, so presumably the first four stanzas were written immediately after the receipt of the "Ode to Dejection." At any rate the Ode opens with this repetition from Coleridge "There was a time when", and moreover the despairing spirit of these first four stanzas is identical with the spirit of "Dejection." Wordsworth it would appear caught the spiritual dolours from Coleridge.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

GENERAL:

- | | | | |
|--|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Age of Johnson. | Seccombe. | Bell & Sons. | 1909. |
| Age of Wordsworth. | Herford. | Bell & Sons. | 1909. |
| The Romantic Revolt. | Vaughan. | Blackwood. | 1907. |
| History of English
Poetry. Vol.VI. | Courthorpe. | Macmillan. | 1892. |
| Intermediate Text-
book of English
Literature. | Wyatt & Low. | University
Tutorial Press. | 1907. |
| Landon: Selections
from. | Colvin. | Macmillan. | 1902. |
| (In the introductory essay the distinction between
Classicism and Romanticism in English Literature
is brilliantly drawn.) | | | |
| Victorian Literature. | Walker. | Cambridge
University
Press. | 1910. |

WORDSWORTH:

- | | | | |
|--|-------------|------------------------|-------|
| The Poetical Works of
Wordsworth. | Hutchinson. | Oxford Univ.
Press. | 1911. |
| The Prose Works of
Wordsworth. | Grosart. | Moxon & Co. | 1876. |
| Appreciations (one essay
on Wordsworth. | Pater. | Macmillan. | 1913. |

La Jeunesse de Wordsworth.	Legouis.	Dent.	1897.
Wordsworth.	Raleigh.	Arnold.	1912.
Selected Poems.	M. Arnold.	Macmillan.	1890.
Literary Studies, Vol. II.	Bagehot.	Longman.	1910.
Wordsworth.	Myers.	Macmillan.	1909.
		English Men of Letters.	
Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning.	Gingerich.	Univ. of Michigan Press.	1911.
A Study in Human Freedom.			
Peter Bell the Third.	Shelley.		

Coleridge:

The Poetical Works of of Coleridge.	Campbell Dykes.	Macmillan.	1905.
Coleridge's Poems.	Quiller Couch.	Oxford Univ. Press.	1912.
		World's Classics.	
Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.	E.H. Coleridge.	Heinemann.	1895.
Biographia Literaria.		Bell & Sons.	1885.
Appreciations (one essay.)	Pater.	Macmillan.	1913.
Coleridge.	Traill.	Macmillan.	1884.
		English Men of Letters.	
New Studies in Literature (one essay.)	Dowden.	Kegan, Paul Trench, Trubner & Co.	1902.

KEATS:

The Poems of John Keats.	E. de Selincourt.	Methuen.	1907.
-----------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------

The Complete Works of Keats.	Buxton Forman.	4 Vols. 1889. Reeves & Turner.
Letters of Keats.	Colvin.	Macmillan. 1891.
History of English Poetry.Vol.VI.	Courthope.	Macmillan. 1892.
Keats.	Colvin.	Macmillan. 1889. English Men of Letters.

SHELLEY:

The Complete Works of Shelley.	Buxton Forman.	Bell & Co. 1900. 5 vols.
Letters of Shelley.	Ingpen.	Pitman. 1909. 2 vols.
Life of P.B.Shelley.	Dowden.	Kegan, Paul, Trench, 1896. Trubner & Co.
Shelley.	Symonds.	Macmillan 1887. English Men of Letters.
Shelley: Selected Poems.	Stopford Brooke.	Macmillan. 1900.
Publications of the Shelley Society.		1886 onwards.
Poetical Dialogues of Plato.		Everyman. Dent. 1914.

Byron:

The Poetical Works of George Gordon, Lord Byron.		Oxford Univ. Press. 1912.
Life of G.Gordon, Lord Byron.	Nichol.	Macmillan. 1880. English Men of Letters.
Life of G.Gordon, Lord Byron.		Dictionary of National Biography.

MATTHEW ARNOLD:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| The Poetical Works
of M. Arnold. | Quiller Couch. | Oxford Univ.
Press. | 1909. |
| Matthew Arnold. | Paul. | Macmillan. | 1902. |
| | | English Men of Letters. | |
| Culture and Anarchy. | M. Arnold. | Nelson. | 1913. |
| Four Poets (one
essay). | Stopford
Brooke. | Duckworth. | 1913. |

TENNYSON:

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Life and Work of
Alfred Lord
Tennyson. | Hallam. Lord
Tennyson. | Macmillan. | 1898. |
| Poems and Plays of Tennyson. | | Macmillan. | 1900. |
| Modern Studies (one
essay.) | Elton. | Arnold. | 1907. |
| Tennyson. | Lyall. | Macmillan. | 1902. |
| | | English Men of Letters. | |
| Illustrations of Tennyson. | | Chatto &
Churton Collins. | Windus. 1891. |

MEREDITH:

- | | | | |
|--|-------------|--|-------|
| The Poems of George
Meredith. | Trevellian. | Constable. | 1912. |
| Poetry and Philosophy
of George Meredith. | Trevellian. | Constable. | 1913. |
| Modern Studies (one
essay.) | Elton. | Arnold. | 1907. |
| New Studies in Lit-
erature (one essay). | Dowden. | Kegan, Paul,
Trench,
Trubner & Co. | 1902. |